



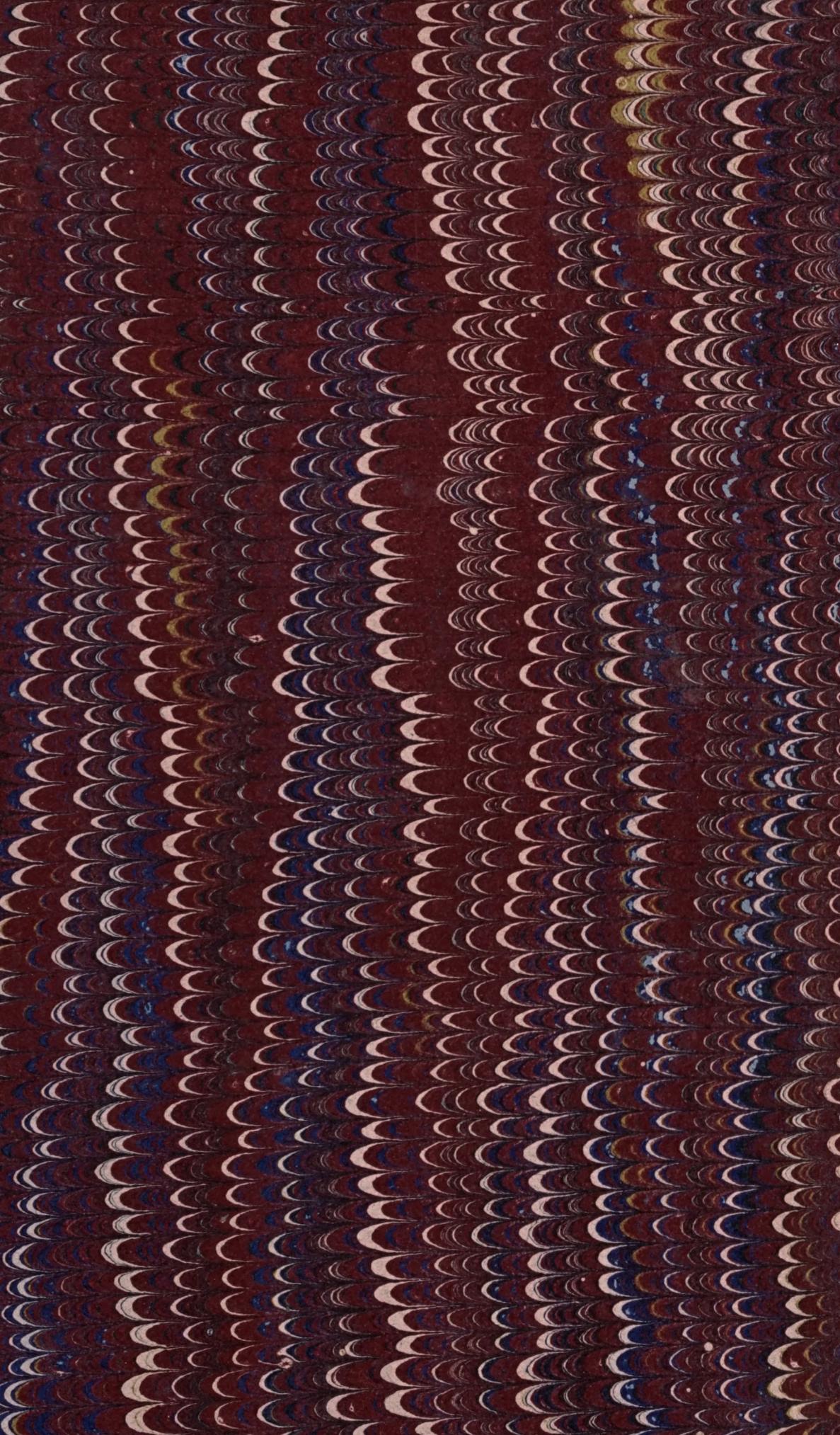
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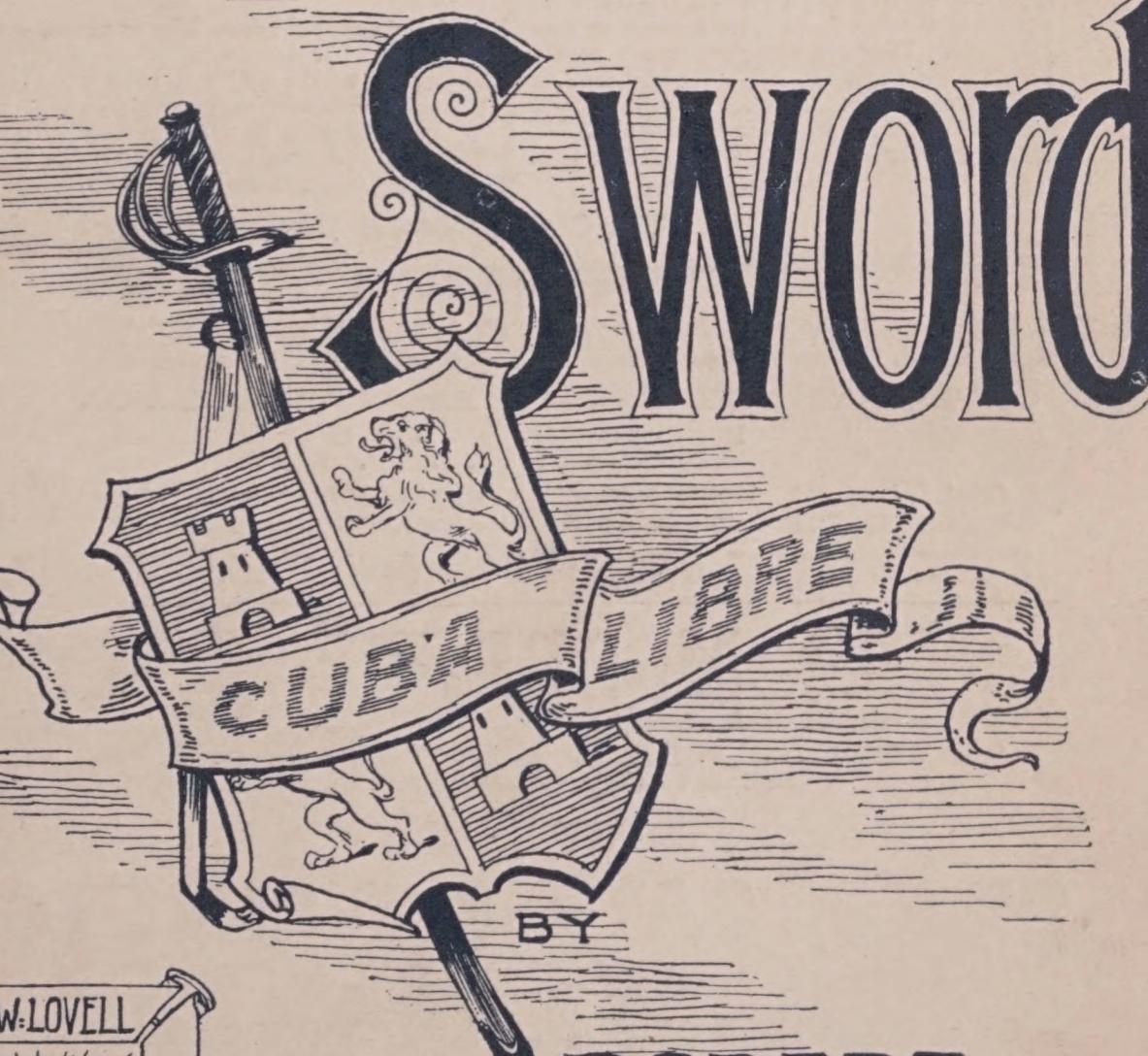
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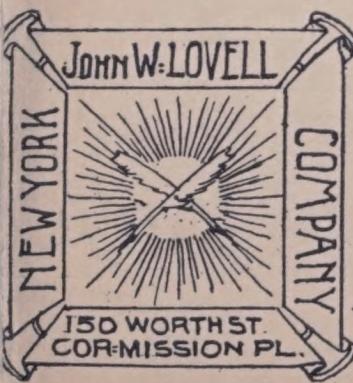
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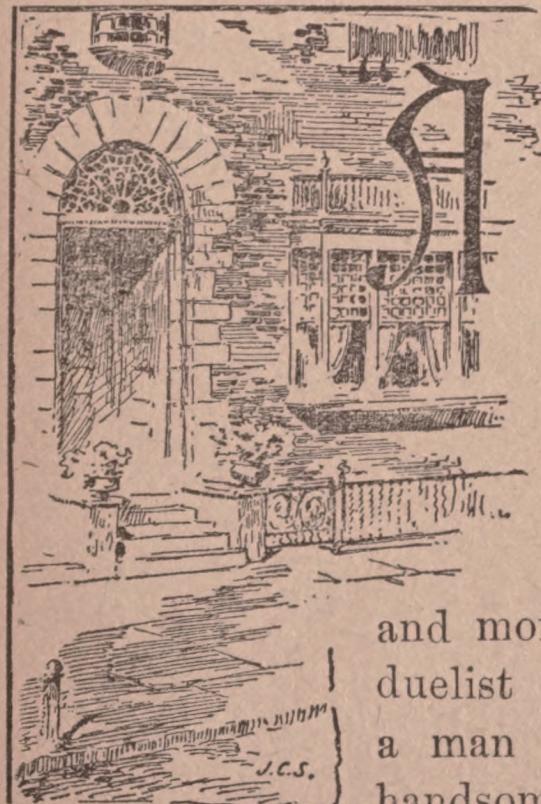
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SAVED BY THE SWORD.

CHAPTER I.

“Her eye’s dark charm ’twere vain to tell,—
 But gaze on that of the gazelle,
 It will assist thy fancy well!
 As large, as languishingly dark.
 But soul beamed forth in every spark
 That darted from beneath the lid.”

—BYRON.



RIGHT clever thrust,
 you Cuban dog! But
 look well to your sword,
 for I will kill you!”

The speaker, Roderick Brawn, who with lowering brow watched each movement of his younger

and more agile opponent, was a duelist of the Virginian school; a man cruel by nature, though handsome of face and form; skilled

in using the deadly weapons of his profession, and with a seeming disregard for the sacredness of life.

His appearance in Boston, shortly after the decadence of southern institutions following the Rebellion, was marked by no outward show of surprise. The close of the Sixties saw troublous times. Society had been shaken by the shock of arms, and had become corrupted by the bitterness of internecine strife, till a spirit of indifference was rife in all the larger cities of the country.

Thus the advent of the duelist Roderick Brawn, as a gentlemanly exponent of the art of fencing, was a matter of small surprise in this bustling city of the East.

Those who frequented the duelist's apartments, and bartered their ducats for a nominal proficiency in handling the foils, were captivated by the suavity of the swordsman; and as a natural sequence, he became the tutelary god of many a youth of gilded fortune, who was fortunate indeed if gambling and its allied vices did not entail their heritage of degradation.

To the police he was known as a dangerous man—one whom, so long as he committed no flagrant breach of the law, it were politic to refrain from meddling with.

There had, however, been rumors of a fatal meeting at Brighton, growing out of some dispute over the cards in a fashionable club house where Roderick Brawn was a visitor. But the matter was so effectually hushed, that the true history of his victim's death is locked within a few faithful breasts.

Ah! well, perhaps it is better so. In days of sudden deaths, when the heart-strings snap from

excessive tension, it is easy to say with the poet,—

“ Only a heart whose pulsations are o'er,
Only a form that will journey no more,
Only a shade for the Stygian shore—
Dropped dead!”

So much for the early history of Roderick Brawn, which at the time of our story we find identified with the unwritten annals of a great city.

In the lapse of years, his haughty nature has felt the influence of that genial atmosphere which permeates the surroundings of a man of the world. There remain the same dexterity of hand, the same quickness of vision, that guided his flashing foil to a vulnerable point, without that repellent manner once so noticeable. Yet to-night, as the sword of Juan Fernandez, disdaining the blade opposed to its progress, inflicts a vexing wound in his shoulder, Roderick Brawn in anger drops the smiling mask which has rendered him an enigma to all who would know the workings of his brain.

“ A right clever thrust, you Cuban dog ! ” does not imply commendation for a pupil’s skill. The words have a tinge of bitterness in their tone that augurs ill for Juan Fernandez.

The young Cuban is quick to perceive their significance, for a fierce, strangely vindictive light comes into his eyes, and an ominous frown darkens his handsome features, as he stands, sword in hand, before the wounded duelist.

“ I know you now, Señor Roderico ! ” he says in excellent English. “ You have forced me to fight that you may kill me ! ”

“I always kill my man,” returned the swordsman doggedly. “And think you, now that a lucky stroke of yours has aroused the demon in me, I will make a show of mercy? No, there shall be no boys’ play here!”

“As a friend, I would bid you be wary, Roderick Brawn,” the surgeon had said to him. “You have no common adversary in this Cuban. I hear he had for his instructor the deadly Mazzantini of Havana. They tell of his wonderful work with the foils at Harvard, and he has a cool head in spite of his Castilian temperament.”

“Bah! You Yankee doctors know nothing of dueling!” was Brawn’s uncivil reply. “After this night you, at least, will have had some valuable experience.”

The conversation of the group was carried on in a low tone of voice, since the quietude of the midnight hour, unbroken save by the rumbling of some belated vehicle, rendered detection not wholly improbable.

The carriages containing Brawn and the Cuban, together with their seconds and the surgeon, had stopped at the least noticeable point, and the drivers—two Jehus known to most men about town after the conventional early hours—were yawning on their boxes by the roadside, apparently indifferent to what was taking place so long as the night’s adventure would bring its own reward.

“We have no time for idle words, gentlemen,” said Colonel Graham at length.

At this brusque warning from the military gentle-

man who had arranged the details of the meeting with soldierly exactness and promptitude, the two combatants resumed the duel in ominous silence.

Roderick Brawn, with white, firmly set lips, looked the incarnation of evil as his eyes met the unflinching gaze of the Cuban.

As for Juan Fernandez, the look of boyish triumph that followed his slight victory over the duelist had vanished, and in its place rested an expression of seriousness, suggestive rather of sadness than fear of the danger that menaced him.

* * * * * * *

That events which precede the meeting of Brawn and Fernandez may be understood, since the unity of the story demands their recapitulation, the reader is asked to attend in imagination the masked ball given at a palatial residence on Beacon Hill, where the fashionable world, in that maddening round of gayety that follows the solemn season of Lent, have gathered to do homage to the god of pleasure.

A home magnificent in all that luxury can supply ; yet barren of real happiness. Redolent to-night of bloom and beauty, filled with music and the laughter of its guests ; but on the morrow the cloister of two hearts that dwell apart within its stately loneliness.

Think of this, ye toilers in life's humble ways, when your eyes with longing turn to towering piles. For, like the mansion of Clifford Reinhardt, they may be only the semblance of that bliss you so fondly picture for those upon whom fortune has showered her favors.

The scene within the brilliantly lighted ball room

suggests a German fête in the Rhineland, which the strains of a Strauss waltz, coming from an unseen orchestra in the conservatory, render intensely realistic.

Beautiful women and handsome men—the flower of the aristocracy—are among the figures threading the mazy windings of the dance. The gay costumes of the ladies have been chosen with a discrimination nicely adjusted to the beauty of the wearers, since their slight masks cannot hide the charm of heaving bosoms and glancing eyes. Ah! what conquests are made within the life of a single waltz.

The music has ceased, and the dancers are standing in little groups, or strolling in couples toward the refreshment room, where cooling sherbets and ices are served amid a Babel of chatter and gayety.

But look—oh! strange infatuation—at yonder Fra Diavolo and the queenly Cleopatra, who have drawn upon themselves an inordinate curiosity by prolonging the waltz till the very echoes of the music have died away.

They seem unconscious of the fact that the dance has ended, for away they are whirling under the spell of that melody born of the soul, oblivious of all save their own existence. It is not possible, since they still retain their masks, to watch the play of countenance seen in two people whose conversation is intended solely for each other; but the veriest dolt cannot help thinking that this “glorious sorceress of the Nile” is captivated by the dashing bandit chief, and that both have identified themselves with the romantic characters assumed. Whispers of

mysterious import circulate freely among the throng of watchers.

“Who is Fra Diavolo?” * * * “Who is Cleopatra?”

Yet among them there is one who recognizes the woman, while the identity of her companion baffles even the jealous scrutiny of a husband’s eye.

Clifford Reinhardt, with illy concealed interest, had watched the couple from the beginning of the waltz, and in the character of a courtier had shadowed them with baleful glances. The bribery of her maid had enabled him to spy upon his wife’s movements, since she knew the character in which her mistress would appear.

“So, my false beauty,” he muttered in low, inaudible tones, “this is my return for the pleasure I would give you. Fool that I am to longer believe you innocent!”

Jealousy, excitement, the thought that she is playing him false beneath his own roof, render the shrewd, impassive broker reckless in a trying moment. The sight of his wife listening to the sweet flattery of a masquerading lover maddens him. And in the midst of it all, the memory of the babe asleep with its nurse up stairs—upon whose life his young wife had lavished the affection denied to him—is like the sudden plunging of a dagger into his doubting heart.

“Oh, this cursed doubt,” he moans in spirit. “How it weighs me down.”

Reinhardt had known that feeling before when domestic storms obscured the matrimonial skies, but

never so intensely as to-night. And yet, as the dancers draw near him, there is a loving pathos in his low, quickly uttered words :

“ Madeline ! Madeline ! Stop this madness, I command you !”

The woman raises her head from Fra Diavolo’s shoulder and looks about in a bewildered way. She seems to realize the situation with intuitive grasp, and summons all her feminine courage to baffle that searching gaze of the masked throng seeking to penetrate their disguises.

Fra Diavolo, too, is quick to perceive that he and his fair companion have unhappily blundered into notoriety. One cannot help thinking, at this moment, how well they assume their respective characters. He with all that self-assurance, bravado and effective gallantry associated with the name of the handsome brigand. She an ideal Cleopatra, proud in her disdain — with large, dark, flashing eyes — just such a woman as we imagine could sway the heart of a Ptolemy or an Antony.

“ Quick !” she whispers. “ My husband must not find you here. Lead me to the conservatory ; from there you can reach the balcony, and escape through the garden ! Oh, the miserable ending of this night ! — when I had hoped to be so happy, free from the espionage of jealous eyes.”

By this time they had passed from the ball room, and paused in the friendly shadow of a flowering cactus, near the low window opening to the balcony.

“ The fault is mine,” he is saying. “ I should not have come. But not upon you,— Madelina ! — must

his vengeance fall. I will stay and meet Señor Reinhardt!"

"No! No! You forget my position. A wife does not desire conviction in her husband's sight. My safety—your own as well—depends upon your instant flight. In mercy to an erring woman, spare me the humiliation of a scene! Go—see, there is some one coming!"

Clifford Reinhardt had seen his mistake in thus betraying himself; and, after the first flash of anger, he too made his way in the direction of the conservatory. He had a horror of public scandal. True, he had not changed his bachelorhood for that conjugal felicity which, in marriages where love is the uniting power, arises like incense from the hymeneal altar. It was the old story of wealth, social position, crafty lovemaking, upon the one side; and upon the other a cold, imperious beauty, who had married well, as the world goes, but who, in yielding to the parental wish, had gone as a lamb to the sacrifice. Yet, we know, it is not uncommon for people who wed unhappily to live a life of partial estrangement beneath the same roof, and still so conduct themselves in the eyes of society as to appear wholly satisfied with their lot.

The horror of such an existence—with no reciprocal affection to soften the austerity of life's duties, and with a knowledge possessed by each that they are daily drifting apart—is a merited but perhaps severe punishment of the folly of forming an alliance in its very nature antagonistic to the Creator's plan.

Two years of such marital experience had told

heavily upon Clifford Reinhardt, and had added to the tell-tale “crows’ feet” very perceptibly. He was not so young as his beautiful wife by twenty years on their marriage day. But at forty a man need not be considered old, though grey hair and thoughtful, refined mannerisms, give warning of approaching age.

If it were not for his extreme jealousy, which made him the enemy of every man his wife chose to be even gracious toward, he might have plunged into the gayety of the time, and by relaxing somewhat his system of espionage among the servants, could perhaps have materially lessened the breach between himself and Madeline, since no woman can be won by outspoken distrust of her marriage vows.

It was this jealous feeling that now impelled him to the rash resolve of tearing the mask from the face of Fra Diavolo, regardless of the courtesy due from him to one of his guests; if, indeed, it should prove, which Reinhardt would fain not believe, that he came by invitation of the master rather than the mistress of the house. Intent on doing this, he had approached the couple in the conservatory unperceived, until only the tall cactus plant separated him from them. With sudden, fierce pain at his heart, he heard their whispered good-night, and saw the stranger bend over her jeweled hand.

Then, hoarse with passion, Reinhardt sprang toward him as he moved in the direction of the balcony.

“Villain!” he cried, “unmask before me, that I may look upon the man who thus betrays my confidence!”

The mute appealing look in the eyes of Cleopatra, meant for him alone, decides the course to be taken by Fra Diavolo, for he reads therein the dread of having her husband gain the knowledge he so much desires. So, fearing to speak, lest his voice betray him, he remains silent.

“By heaven! then, I will do what you dare not,” said Reinhardt, grasping at the mask that concealed the other’s features, save a dark, curling moustache, and handsome, firmly-set mouth.

A short, quick blow from Fra Diavolo, staggers the broker for a moment and causes him to relax his hold on the stranger, who, passing hurriedly into the garden, is lost in the darkness of night.

* * * * *

On her husband becoming involved in a quarrel with the masked stranger, Mrs. Reinhardt had fled to her own room, the windows of which overlooked the garden below. I will do her the justice to say she deeply regretted her share in the night’s episode; but the fact that she had been spied upon in all her actions, through the connivance of her husband with those who knew the part she intended to take in the masquerade, left a sting that rankled in her proud bosom like a poisoned barb.

“If it were not for baby,” she moaned, “I would leave this prison for ever!”

The thought of her child led her irresistibly to nurse’s room, to find the baby sleeping soundly and sweetly in his crib. Thrilled with love for her child, she bent to kiss the pretty face nestled between two chubby fists; but fearing to wake him, she instead

lightly pressed his tangled curls and returned with trembling heart to her own apartments.

A sudden fear was inspired by the ominous crack of a pistol borne on the night wind, followed by the deep, savage barking of the watch-dog, and a confused murmur of voices. These told her, plainer than words, that Fra Diavolo had been discovered and was being hunted down.

The guests in alarm had voluntarily unmasked, and her absence from the ball room might be noticed, she thought. But to appear among them as Cleopatra, after the scene just enacted, would be fatal in its consequences. So, summoning her maid, she exchanged the rich, voluptuous garments of the Egyptian, for a robe of cardinal hue that displayed her brunette beauty to a rare degree.

“There is terrible times below, ma’am,” said the garrulous Mary. “Thomas saw a robber stealing off through the garden, and he untied his dog, and the police has come, and they is all searching the premises.”

“Yes, yes,” she said in answer, “I know. But hurry, so I may see the silver isn’t stolen.”

So far she breathed free, since all thought the man in the garden some thief who had gained an entrance during the confusion of the masquerade.

“Oh, that he may elude them!” was her inmost prayer.

She thankfully noted that her husband was not in sight when she descended to bid the ladies good-night. His presence might provoke a scene, and lead to consequences she was straining every nerve

to avert. If she could avoid him until morning, when his anger would have lost much of its virulence, she felt that, guilty as she was of justly arousing his indignation, she could then meet him without compromising her honor as a woman, however culpable she might appear in her duty as a wife and the mother of his child.

"You poor dear!" was the sympathetic outburst that greeted Mrs. Reinhardt from all sides as she appeared among her friends,—"weren't you dreadfully frightened?"

Scarcely divining their meaning, she answers in such language as seems to serve the occasion best, and with a vague idea that the supposititious burglar is in some way connected with herself in the minds of her guests.

"It's so horrible to find a robber in the house, and especially searching for one's jewels in one's very room!"

"The wonder is he did not kill you!"

"I know I should have fainted, had I been in your place!"

These and similar remarks, quite unintelligible to her, prompt the reply:

"I—I—am not so sure that I understand you."

"Why, didn't you see the robber opening your jewel box?" they chorus in return. "Mr. Reinhardt and the officers have tracked him to the garden, you know."

"Yes," she answers, "I know some thief has been discovered, but I did not see him. And I have just left my room."

"Oh, then it must have been your maid. She has been telling us of the robbery and her struggle with the burglar upstairs."

The truth is Mary had been giving the frightened ladies a graphic description of her heroism ; and as the whole affair was one of pure fiction, invented by the maid to gratify a morbid desire for notoriety, her mistress evinced no wish to rob her of the laurels she had gained, since the romance tended to distract attention from other things.

"Mary is a brave girl," she answers quietly.

A servant appeared with the startling intelligence that an officer had captured the burglar, after a spirited resistance, and was bringing him into the vestibule for identification ; but beyond a slight show of excitement, no more nor less than is common to womankind in the presence of impending danger, Mrs. Reinhardt gave no outward signs of her emotion.

She seems impelled toward the spot where the officer is standing with his prisoner, surrounded by a curious crowd, drawn together by a desire to catch a glimpse of his face. Eager, yet fearing to meet his gaze, she presses nearer to the throng, until a pair of large, wildly-rolling eyes, fix themselves upon her own and plead for protection with silent eloquence.

At first she doubts the revelation, for instead of Fra Diavolo, struggling in the rough grasp of a minion of the law, is beheld a small, misshapen body, its deformity consisting of an unsightly hump between the shoulders, which imparts to the whole

figure a suggestiveness of impish character, and makes the arms, now entwining themselves in frantic endeavors to unloose the hold of their captor, appear of almost superhuman length and activity.

Yet there is nothing in the appearance of this strange youth, thief though he may be, to repel generous sympathy; rather is it true, despite his incongruous style of dress, that a kindly eye can see in him qualities which appeal to the philanthropic heart. He has a face that in others would be called intellectual, and more than comely. Great wide-open blue eyes, and curling locks, are not without their charm in all conditions of life; but that very charm becomes the more noticeable when its possessor, like some rare flower struggling to reach the sunlight, thrives within the vitiated atmosphere of a city's slums.

"What is your name, child?" asks Mrs. Reinhardt, moved to pity by that appealing look.

"Dandy," is the reply.

A smile that overspread the features of those crowding around him, since the appellation seemed so much at variance with his make-up, operated to impress the ladies in his favor.

"And your other name?" she asks.

"Only Dandy. That's wot they all calls me."

"Well, then, Dandy," said the policeman gruffly, but not unkindly, "we'll have to be going; so you may bid the ladies good-night. The Island 's the place for you. Little thieves won't get much sympathy wasted on 'em there."

"Oh, missus! don't let 'em send me to jail!" he

pleaded, with those expressive eyes on Mrs. Reinhardt's face. "I haint stealed nothin' here. I only climbed over the fence so 's ter hear the moosic, an' pipe off the big folks dancing inside. Yer might give a poor cove a show!"

A natural feeling of pity prompted her to ask the patrolman to let his young prisoner go free.

"It's no use, ma'am," the officer respectfully replied, "to pity the kid. He'll only show his gratitude by breaking into the house some dark night. If he'll tell who the other in the garden was, I wouldn't mind so much if he manages to slip away from me. T' other one was a man, and this is only a boy."

"Don't I tell yer I'se alone!" broke in Dandy, seeing that the policeman's story about an accomplice would make his case all the more difficult. "I only wanted to see the people and listen to the moosic."

"You have a fine ear for music, you have," was the sarcastic reply, "and six months down the bay will give you lots of time to cultivate it. Oh, you're a deep one, you are!"

"Officer, why don't you take your prisoner away?"

This question was asked by Clifford Reinhardt, who hot and excited by his chase in the garden, smarting under the insult of the blow from Fra Diavolo, and tortured by his wife's unfaithfulness, was not moved by any considerations of mercy for the little hunch-back caught peering in at his windows.

"The child says he did not come here to steal," said Mrs. Reinhardt, championing Dandy's cause.

Her proud, beautiful bearing, as she unflinchingly met her husband's gaze, abashed him for the moment.

"He is only some street Arab whose fondness for music has lured him into your grounds."

"And you believe this unlikely story?"

"I do, sir. If my wishes are consulted you will not have him sent to prison."

"And ours as well, Mr. Reinhardt," said several of the ladies, inspired by the leadership of their hostess.

Seeing that the weight of sympathy inclined so strongly toward the prisoner, he questioned the boy, and found him straightforward in his answers. What more common, he asked himself, than to find such as he about the city at night? And he might have added, what more natural than that such a one, roving aimlessly through the dark streets, should be attracted by the sounds of music and gayety within some mansion like his own.

"Since the ladies desire it," he said, "you may let the boy go. I may be acting under a false impulse, but as he has not really committed any theft, I will not trouble you further."

"Very well, sir; if that's your orders, why all right," said the patrolman.

When released by the officer, Dandy's joy prompted him to do a double-shuffle before that chagrined individual, indicative, presumably, of his triumph over arbitrary justice, if one may use such a paradoxical expression. His comical actions, and the grotesque appearance imparted by a Prince Albert coat, shiny by reason

of long wear and several sizes too large, made even Reinhardt smile; and Dandy, after bowing his thanks to those who had interceded for him, was conducted to the door by a servant and told to make himself scarce. The alacrity with which the little hunch-back acted upon this advice attested his eagerness to avoid again falling into the meshes of the law.

It was over at last—the farewells, the hollow-hearted nothings, the simulation of happiness—and in the quietude of her luxurious chamber, dimly lighted by a single gas-jet burning low in the chandelier, Mrs. Reinhardt sat dreamily reviewing the events of the past few hours.

Those who knew this unhappy woman as Madeline Maitland, when she was a reigning belle, will tell of the charm of manner—more potent than beauty—that was the crowning glory of a joyous girlhood.

If it were with a feeling of apprehension some few of her friends watched the unfolding of her charms, it was because they guessed Gregory Maitland's great need of money, and feared that, to save himself from the financial wreck that threatened so many at the close of the war, the old West India merchant would not hesitate to sacrifice his child to some rich suitor; and this, too, in wilful blindness as to her heart's dictates. More than this, it was no secret that her education tended to exalt the great desirability of wealth, social position, and that prestige enjoyed by reason of in uential connection, in any love affair involving an offer of marriage. And so, in her wanton freedom, the girl thought only of the present.

The crisis came at a time when Clifford Reinhardt, absenting himself from gay companions at the Bachelors' Club, was intent upon winning the beautiful Madeline for his wife, and he finally made an offer of his heart and fortune, only to meet with an unequivocal refusal, couched in such kindly language as the girl thought was due her father's friend.

But it was none the less a spirited rejection of a proud man's love. Still, like the moth that woos destruction in the flame, the rich broker hovered within the circle of her charms, till each smile not bestowed upon himself was a torture; while Madeline, with girlish thoughtlessness, basked in the favor of younger men, and rather preferred the society of those who could "lute and flute fantastic tenderness" without falling on their knees and calling her an angel.

The girl was now in her twentieth year, a favorite with all, and ranked among the fairest women of her set. That she was conscious of her beauty, and not averse to adulation because of the gift, it is useless to deny. The fault, if such it deserves to be called, is one not uncommon to her sex. And of all uninteresting women, commend to me those who have no adequate conception of their charms, which, be they ever so commonplace in the eyes of the casual beholder, are deserving of assiduous cultivation.

"But Madeline had a lover?" you ask. Ah! impatient reader, it is hard to penetrate the mysteries of a woman's heart; and infinitely more difficult does the task become, when we seek to learn the heart-secrets of some gay butterfly of society.

Suddenly she arose, drew her magnificent figure to its full height, and paced excitedly about the room. Becoming calmer, there was yet something almost tragic in her mein, as with eyes that looked beyond the present, and perchance into the dimness of a happy past, she stood at her window gazing up into the faces of the stars.

How peaceful it seemed after the excitement of the ball room! The effect was tranquilizing to her high-strung nerves, and, lowering her eyes, she dwelt upon that vista of peace seemingly spread out in illimitable expanse below;—a city sleeping beneath its watchful spires, while beyond lay the ocean gleaming like silver in the light of a rising moon.

If these were days of mythological credulity, she might look to see the Queen of Love journeying toward sea-girt Paphos, drawn in that wonderful chariot fashioned by the poetic imagination, and join in the pæan accorded to her praise :

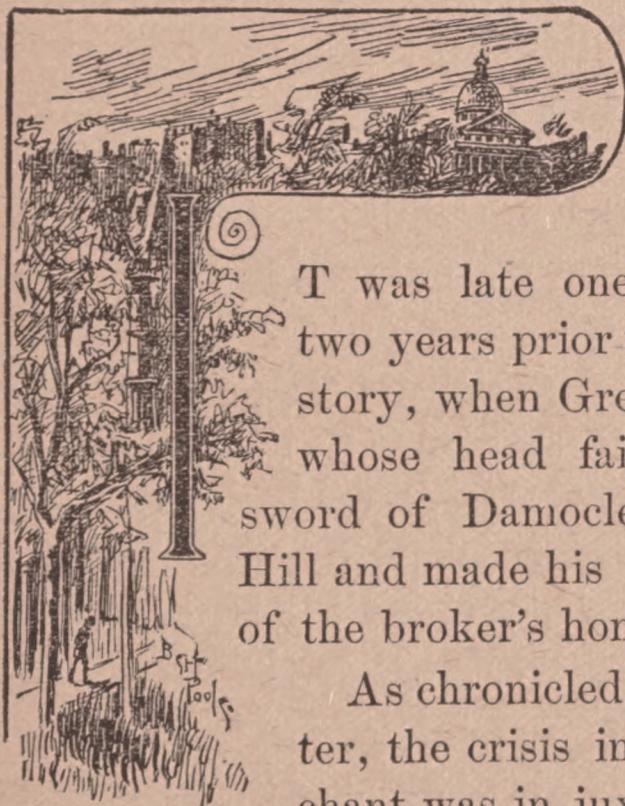
“A brooding calm seems on the western seas,
As if to list thy swans’ soft-rustling wings!
A hush as when some love-lorn naiad sings
To dreamful sleep, beside their crystal springs,
The nymphs Hesperides.”

But Madeline was gazing out upon that sea where, two centuries before, the pinnace of the Puritan—and not the swan-drawn car of Venus—crept gladly to the sheltering shores of a new world. Its voice to-night has the same music; for though friends grow cold,—fortune deserts us,—love puts on the habiliments of change,—the sea is ever young and full of hope.

CHAPTER II.

“Who knows of the tremulous chords of love,
To the lightest touch that vibrate still?
As under her wing the stricken dove
Unmurmuring folds, although it kill,
The cruel mark of the archer’s skill!”

—CAROLINE DANA HOWE.



T was late one summer afternoon, two years prior to the opening of our story, when Gregory Maitland, over whose head failure hung like the sword of Damocles, ascended Beacon Hill and made his way in the direction of the broker’s home.

As chronicled in the previous chapter, the crisis in the life of the merchant was in juxtaposition with Clifford Reinhardt’s offer of marriage to Madeline and her polite refusal to become his wife.

He looked like a man who having formed some sudden purpose in his mind, would carry it out to the bitter end. His position was indeed painful to contemplate. By one of those unlucky strokes of fortune, he was reduced to the humiliating expedient of raising money to meet urgent obligations, and failure to do this meant absolute ruin. And, in his

hour of extreme need, Reinhardt & Company, whose name had tided him over dangerous financial straits in times past, had declined to longer endorse his paper or lend a helping hand.

"I am glad to see you, Maitland, indeed I am," said the broker pleasantly, going to a sideboard and producing a decanter and glasses. "But before we talk business, join me in a glass of wine—rare old Madeira, too. Your nerves will feel the better for it, after your walk up the hill."

The wine was drunk in silence. Maitland was singularly silent and reserved; and Reinhardt had too much good sense, under the circumstances that induced his visitor's ill humor, to drink his health in the sparkling vintage.

"Well," said the merchant at length, "shall we proceed?"

"If it suits your pleasure," Reinhardt answered.

The latter felt a peculiar feeling stealing over him—a chilliness, and nervous tremor—and mechanically helped himself to another glass of Madeira. He knew, without one word having been uttered upon the subject, that Gregory Maitland had come to speak of Madeline in connection with his business difficulties.

"At any cost," he assured himself, "I will make her mine." At any cost did he say? The enormity of the phrase seemed overwhelming, and he modified it by mentally resolving, "At any cost but that of my honor."

"Reinhardt," said his visitor suddenly, "I sent a messenger to your bank to-day."

"Yes," he answered, pronouncing the monosyllable slowly and not without some hesitation.

"And you refused the supplication of a drowning man!"

"Yes—No. Say, rather, that we were constrained by circumstances from granting your request."

"But you know what it involves. My God! Clifford, think of what you are doing!"

"All this is very painful to me, my dear Maitland. But am I to blame that your ventures turn out wrong? Is it I who sink your ships upon the sea, or cause the market to fall when you expect it to rise? We cannot go on advancing you these large sums of money."

"But it is only for a time. A month—a week even—may see the end of financial troubles. The tide must turn some day."

"Some day," repeated Reinhardt. "A mere chimera of speech."

"Clifford," said the old merchant half piteously, "for the sake of our former friendship, don't mock me in my misfortune."

"Why speak of former friendship, as if it were a thing of the past? Are we not yet friends?"

"Yes, in name, perhaps. But I fancy—I know—that since your love affair with Madeline, you have changed toward me in many things. You know how deeply I regret her answer to you, and that she should have caused you pain. The child is young, thoughtless, too prodigal of her beauty; but even you, cold and analytical as you are toward her sex,

once saw in her something worthy of admiration—yes, of love."

"Why will you always speak in a past tense?" demanded Reinhardt, rising and pacing up and down his study. "Is it so long ago since I knelt at your daughter's feet, that time has revolutionized my feelings?"

He was, he assured himself, quite cool and collected. The facts, however, would hardly bear out his reasoning: since the wine he had drunk, while serving to elevate his spirits, had loosened his tongue and filled his head with thoughts of Madeline.

"Am I such an ugly fellow, Maitland," he asked with a sudden change of mood, "as to inspire a woman with dread at the thought of marrying me?"

The negative of this was only too plain. Clifford Reinhardt was a handsome man, whose fine face and figure, as he stood on the steps of his favorite club some pleasant afternoon—listlessly watching the throng—would cause him to be noticed among a score of comely men.

In physique he inherited much from his Knickerbocker ancestors, and was of compact build without inclining to obesity; with a fair, soft, curling beard, and clear, honest grey eyes. A shrewd financier, he was concerned in the boldest operations of the day; and the knowledge thus gained of men, so essential to a successful broker, had perhaps made him over suspicious. He was in his fortieth year; and, strange to say, his ten years of club life and the wear and tear of business had imparted no appearance of age beyond that limit.

Yet in the person of the quiet gentleman who, twice a week, as regular as the weeks came round, drove his prancing bays down Beacon Hill and drew rein before the modest but substantial home of the Maitlands, centered the matrimonial aspirations of a score of aristocratic mamas with marriageable daughters.

But that was before he had proposed to Madeline ; when hope shed a luminous light over his pathway, and the prize seemed his for the asking. Now there was an end to those delightful rides together out into the crisp, invigorating country air, laden with sweet-smelling perfumes ; for now there was no longer doubt that Madeline did not regard him as a lover, and he, like a sensible man, had begun to avoid the fair coquette and leave the field to younger men.

"Your question is well put," said Maitland in reply to the broker's query. "It was not lack of personal address, nor aught becoming the character of a gentleman, that influenced Madeline's choice. For you she cherishes a warm regard. But the disparity of years, as you have yourself confessed, often weighs heavily with a woman in matters of the heart. A little patience, some show of interest in her still, may cause her to reflect—to see the mistake she has made."

"You think so?" asked Reinhardt nervously. "But no ; you mistake sympathy for something more, I fear."

"And yet pity, the proverb tells us, is akin to love. Once you become the object of a woman's

commiseration, there are many little avenues open to her heart, either of which may serve to reach the citadel of her affections. He is a faint-hearted soldier who will not prolong the siege."

"True, true," said Reinhardt reflectively. "All is fair, they say, in love and war. But I lack the fire of youth; my life has run too long in the old grooves to play the boy at forty. So, as your visit to me is one of business import, we'll dismiss the theme into which we have unconsciously drifted, and turn our attention to weightier matters."

This was said with charming nonchalance, but it did not deceive Gregory Maitland. He had accomplished his object in bringing Madeline so prominently into the conversation, and was content to await developments. The seed had not fallen on barren ground; but pride was antagonistic to its growth.

"To resume," continued Reinhardt, "you want money, but can offer no adequate security. You will, perhaps, urge the claims of friendship; and I, acting in strict business integrity, must protect the interests of other people. Have I correctly outlined the case?"

"You seem to have done so to your own satisfaction, at least. But in so far as this you are right: I do want money—much of it. Thirty thousand dollars!"

"Which, added to the amount now on our books, and partially secured by mortgage, makes"—

"Fifty thousand," said Maitland quietly, as if the sum need excite no surprise.

"And if you do not get it — what then?"

"Beggary for me and mine," the merchant said bitterly. "The crash will come and all will soon be over. My property is mortgaged for its value — so there is nothing. The inevitable is easily foreseen. My family will be turned out of doors, while I, broken in purse and spirit, can provide but poor shelter for them elsewhere."

"You paint a dismal picture," said Reinhardt with a shudder.

"Dismal it may be — but not overdrawn!" said Maitland bitterly. "My eye has too nice a perception of poverty's outlines to fail in the delineation. Think of the sleepless nights allotted to a man who sees that cursed word, FAILURE, written on everything about him, and ask yourself if it can be otherwise! For me there is no need of a Daniel to read the handwriting on the wall. I am a Belshazzar who can interpret the signs."

"Maitland, I am shocked! You speak of this thing as it were inevitable; and, also, as if you little cared how soon the blow shall fall."

"Why should I care? Anything — beggary even — is better than this mental torture."

But these hopes of yours — the successful issue of your ventures in South America — are they no longer tenable?"

"If I had money, who can tell what new life might be infused into that languishing enterprise?"

A period of silence fell upon the two men, in which each surveyed the other with puzzled expression. Reinhardt was visibly affected by Maitland's

candid disclosure of his private affairs. If the merchant would only come to a point—say something indicative of his motive in paying him the visit—he felt that an understanding might be arrived at to their mutual interest. The outcome of the interview, he fondly imagined, was to make secure his claim upon the hand of Madeline, if in so doing he was forced to stoop from his high position to gain an advantage by unfair means.

It was with a sort of vague knowledge that if he could inveigle Maitland into a transaction of a purely personal character, and lay him under a stress of obligation to himself, the influence of the father might have a salutary effect upon the daughter, that he had craftily maneuvered with his colleagues to withhold the firm's assistance from the merchant. So far his machinations had succeeded. It only remained for him to play his cards with discriminating judgment, and force the other to an avowal of his real intentions.

“And if through me this calamity is averted,”—it is Reinhardt speaking—“what is to be my reward?”

“Ask what you will that is within my power to grant.”

“I prefer that you should take the initiative in this matter,” said the broker quietly. He had again seated himself opposite his visitor, and was drumming idly with his shapely white fingers upon the table, meanwhile reflectively studying the varying effects wrought by the play of light upon the ruby fluid in the decanter.

“I come to you — who have ever been a welcome aspirant for her hand — and ask that, for the sake of the old days, you will intervene your influence at the bank, and not let the thoughtless act of a girl who scarcely knew her own heart impel you to a course unworthy a generous nature.”

“It is well you approach me in Madeline’s behalf,” replied Reinhardt with much show of excitement.

“I foresaw your answer,” his visitor said. “But there is more to say. You love her still, Clifford. Ah! start and color like a boy in his teens. That tell-tale flush is mightier than words! At forty a man does not regard a woman with ethereal passion; it grows upon him like a fever; it creeps into every fibre of his being.”

“Have you come to taunt me with my weakness?” Reinhardt cried, his eyes flashing with newly kindled emotion. “Is it not enough that I love your daughter passionately — hopelessly — without having to listen to an arraignment of my folly?”

“Nonsense, Clifford,” said the merchant soothingly.

“You are excited, and misconstrue my words. Now listen to reason, and you will learn that your love is not utterly hopeless. If it shall transpire that I have come to you with the assurance of this happiness you desire” — he leaned across the table and looked the banker straight in the eye — “have you the courage to grapple with an unpleasant duty — the subjugation of a woman’s will to your own?”

It was out at last — the question that must inevitably come — and Reinhardt felt that he had gained

the mastery. After all, he reasoned, a man's happiness is paramount to superficial conventionalities.

"I have the courage of a man who would risk anything — everything — for the woman he loves!"

"Then let us understand each other, and have done with dissimulation. You believe, as I do, that Madeline is not averse to marriage viewed in its social light, and regards you in a not unfriendly way. What, then, with my help, is to come between you and your desires?"

"That Cuban student, possibly, with his twanging guitar, and rich, musical voice."

"What, Fernandez? Pshaw! He is no more to her than the others."

"But he is a fascinating fellow, nevertheless, with dreamy, dark eyes and engaging manners."

"Juan is a typical child of the palm island — gay, courteous, fond of life, an agreeable person to cultivate — and though an ardent lover of Cuban liberty, he has all the courtliness of his Spanish sire, with a certain nobleness of character I cannot but admire."

"Have you quite exhausted the fine qualities of this Cuban?" was the broker's sneering remark.

"But we have nothing to fear from Fernandez. He sings very cleverly, and plays his guitar like a troubadour; and since he moves in good society, my daughter cannot be severely criticized for her interest in him. Our women, you know, are apt to become romantic over these foreign fellows."

"Yes — and to their sorrow, as many unhappy marriages attest. But you spoke of your help in winning Madeline for my wife. Perhaps you have

already formulated a plan of action ; if so, will you kindly enlighten me ?”

“ On my return,” replied the merchant, “ Madeline must be told the truth. I will say to her that you have, through me, renewed your offer of marriage at a time when other friends stand ready to desert us ; that you are patient in your love, and content to develop the latent affection she is capable of, so long as the protecting influence of your name is thrown about her. In short, that by becoming your wife, she will make secure not only the happiness of herself, but that of her parents.”

“ And if she refuses ?” Reinhardt asks in a cold, impassive voice.

“ Ah, but she will not refuse !” is the reply. “ Trust me, Clifford, in all that I have said. I, as her father, pledge my word for that.”

“ I am glad you are so sanguine, for if Madeline can thus easily surrender herself to me, her feelings toward me must be such as to give a hope of winning not only her hand alone, but her heart as well ! Say what you have to say to Madeline at once — the sooner the better. I will call on her this evening and renew my offer in person. On her answer depends — you know what is in my mind.”

After the merchant’s departure, Reinhardt sat a long time reviewing the subject of their interview. It was not without a twinge of conscience that he succeeded in convincing himself the part he was playing was not an utterly villainous one. And so long did it take him to reach this conclusion that the purple shadows of twilight were falling — stealing

into his study in troops of dusky forms — when he aroused himself to the lateness of the hour.

In the meantime a painful scene was being enacted between the merchant, Madeline and her mother, since it was not deemed best to acquaint the younger children with the misfortune that threatened to overtake the family. Time enough for that, the father thought, when the ugly truth can be no longer kept from them. But Madeline, unhappily, could not be spared a recital of the case, made all the more harrowing by the father's anxiety to impress her with the hopelessness of the situation, and the blow fell upon her young life with crushing force. Reared in luxury, accustomed to the flattery of those around her, and ignorant as a babe of the world's rough manners, it is no wonder she shrank from the thought of going out into its toiling millions to fight her way.

In fancy she could see herself — a poorly-paid shop girl, dressed in the humble habiliments of labor — hurrying along in the early morning, a mere atom in the great stream of humanity that flows through the main artery of the bustling, work-a-day city. Often she had gone for an early canter on her pretty Dapple, riding till the wind and excitement together brought the roses to her cheeks and a brilliant sparkle to her dark eyes, when the workers in the human hive were spreading themselves over the vast area allotted to trade and its allied arts. At such times she would ride slowly along, if there were not a dangerous crush of vehicles to impede her progress, and contemplate the faces in that hurrying

throng. Pretty faces there were, too—but many were pale and careworn. It was a heterogenous mass, of mixed nationality, that passed her by—casting admiring, and often envious, glances at the beautiful aristocrat who rode her horse in such queenly style, but who regarded them with a kindly and even sympathetic look. And in truth, Madeline had a generous pity for them. Not that she felt the need of letting her womanly sympathies go out to the dapper young fellows who ogled her from the cars, for their seeming rudeness implied a sense of their own importance; but there were others—weak, puny girls, and hard-worked, broken-down heads of families—for whom she entertained a wish that life had come in kinder guise.

"It is for your sake, papa," she said, at length, caressing Gregory Maitland's bowed head with loving touch, "that I shed these tears. You who have done so much to make me happy. But surely our friends will not forsake us! Or, at least, you will not be too proud to accept their assistance?"

"Ah! my darling, you do not realize how easily even friendship gives way before these things. One by one, my hopes have left me within the week, till now there seems but a solitary friend who lets me lean upon him."

"And that is—who?" asks the girl excitedly.

"Clifford Reinhardt, the man who once did you the honor to offer himself in marriage."

"Dear, good Mr. Reinhardt," she murmurs, not referring to that part of her father's answer upon which he laid the most stress—namely, the former

matrimonial intentions of the banker. "And you will not refuse his generosity, papa?"

"Could I do otherwise?" he asks, rising in well-simulated perturbation and looking down upon her. "Think of your treatment of that noble-hearted fellow, Madeline! No, I cannot accept help at his hands, with the memory of the wrong done him by a child of mine still uneffaced. Better that the worst should come; and if I am driven to a desperate thing, may you, my child, forgive your unhappy father."

"Father!" cried Madeline, "you know not what you are saying! Listen to what is passing in my mind."

She was wonderfully, surprisingly calm, and to Maitland's view she seemed to assume the character of mature womanhood, with keen, natural instincts, alive to the necessity of sustaining the falling fortunes of the family.

"If I should go to Mr. Reinhardt," she continued, "and tell him how sorry I am; that I still like him as a friend; and ask his forgiveness on my bended knees,—do you think he would remember the past? Then you could meet him differently, papa."

"You need not go to him, my child; he will come to you—this very night, if you wish—and lay his fortune at your feet. Only in becoming his wife, Madeline, can you hope to remove the barrier that interposes itself between his assistance and our downfall. Nothing else you can say—no abject apology you may make—will move me from my avowed purpose."

"But I do not love this man!" she cried, half in anger. He had expected this and was prepared for it.

"And yet you do not dislike him—no woman could. He is worthy the most ennobling affection."

"Yes, I know; he is more than worthy. But it all comes so suddenly—so different from what it was this morning, when it seemed to me that I never felt happier."

"Then think of the misery in store for us when we are driven from this home—*beggars!* Be a woman, Madeline! for the hour has come when you can show your loyalty to a father's interests, and prove that the blood of a Maitland courses through your veins!"

"Father!" Madeline arose from a sitting posture on a low, plush-covered ottoman by the window, and turned the magnetic influence of her dark eyes upon Gregory Maitland's face. He quailed before that scrutinizing gaze. And well he might; for, like the lightning glance of a lean, lank Cassius, it seemed to look quite through the deeds of men. It was like some metamorphosis—this sudden transition from a tear-bedight, passive-minded girl, to a passionate, hard-featured woman, who showed a dangerous inclination to probe matters to their ultimate depths.

"Is Clifford Reinhardt coming here to-night?"

"Yes; that is, I expect him," was her father's answer.

"To take advantage of our trouble, and urge me to marry him for his money?" she continued, with a scornful curl of her lip.

"As a friend, Madeline," the merchant interposed, "who takes the only honorable means in his power to succor me in my great need."

"Are you sure of this?" She was growing incredulous, her father noticed. He must be decisive in his dissemblance.

"Quite sure, my child. No entreaties will move me from my purpose, not to accept a loan from him while you remain obdurate to his wishes. But the subject gives you pain, and we will not discuss it further now. You had better go to your room, my dear, and compose yourself, while I talk over affairs with your mother. When Clifford comes, and, like the noble fellow that he is, offers to confer happiness and honor upon you, I trust you will not let him plead in vain; for then I shall know you do leave your father to his fate."

Gravely, lovingly, he conducted her to the heavy balustered, winding staircase, and watched her till she had passed along the corridor to her room. A sigh—deep-drawn and prophetic of a parent's love—escaped his lips.

"Ah, poor little Madge! The first real sorrow of your life has come. God forgive me, if I am doing you a wrong; but Reinhardt has me in his power, and your beauty alone can loosen his purse-strings. After all it is best. You will be rich, loved—happy in the end. What does a coquette know of love? Bah! nothing!"

Thus soliloquizing, Maitland sought his wife again, while Madeline sobbed bitterly in her room—a prey to the most conflicting, tortuous emotions, that can mock a woman's heart.

An hour later, as she stole out into her little garden, where the air was fragrant with the breath of roses, and the subtle, penetrating odors of mignonette and violets, with the stronger, but no less agreeable, perfume of the syringa, diffused themselves abroad upon a cool westerly wind, one ignorant of what had taken place could find no trace of sorrow or suffering upon her countenance. It was the calm that succeeds a tempest; when the winds die out, and the clouds are scattered; and peace, like a storm-beaten bird, sinks down upon the great expanse of stillness.

True to his word, Clifford Reinhardt called on the Maitlands early after tea. He looked flushed and excited, and perhaps had taken more wine than was his wont; but he was the same polished, handsome gentleman as ever, and Madeline received him with much of the old warmth of friendship. Yet there was a certain strange air of self-possessed, even independent bearing, that puzzled him sadly to comprehend.

"She is no longer a bright, impulsive girl," he thought; "but a woman—and endowed with all the attributes of her sex. I had expected to find her in tears. Then it would be easier to say what even now trembles on my lips. But to me it augurs well; she will listen to my suit, because she realizes her father's dependence on my help."

He was, therefore, not wholly unprepared for her answer when, after a season of polite conversation, leading up to the one subject in the mind of himself and the family, Madeline calmly delivered herself of

this speech, with none of that maidenly coyness and reserve associated with the thought of a woman yielding willing acquiescence to a lover's wishes :

“I will be your wife, Clifford Reinhardt, since you have twice honored me with a choice. *But I do not love you as I wish I could.* This is my answer, and, in making it, I feel it is due you to know the truth.”

A strange reply, surely. But, with all the craftiness of a Richard, he might exclaim : “Was ever woman in such humor wooed ; was ever woman in such humor won ?” It was enough for him that the beautiful girl who laid her hand in his, in token of their betrothal, did not recoil from him as from some monster in human form. He knew he had taken a desperate step, and was equally culpable with his prospective father-in-law in the matter of conspiring to gain an unwilling bride. But the consciousness of victory elated him to such a degree, that he regarded himself as no worse than a clever strategist, who had “grasped the skirts of happy chance,” and was content to worship his idol of stone, till, like Pygmalion calling on the gods for happiness, the roseate flush of love should animate the marble form with the warmth of a reciprocal passion.

“Madeline,” he gravely replied, “such love as mine can indeed be patient. I am content to know, that in consenting to marry me there are no attachments that bind you to another. By and by, when our lives shall have one and the same meaning, God grant that the memory of this hour — when I take

you to my heart with those cruel words upon your lips — be forgotten by us both, or remembered only as some unpleasant dream."

Suffice it to say that Madeline gave her consent to an early marriage, and a month from the day when Gregory Maitland sealed the compact with the broker on Beacon Hill, she entered the society of that world by itself, its acknowledged queen in brilliancy of beauty, and the peer of all in wealth and social distinction.

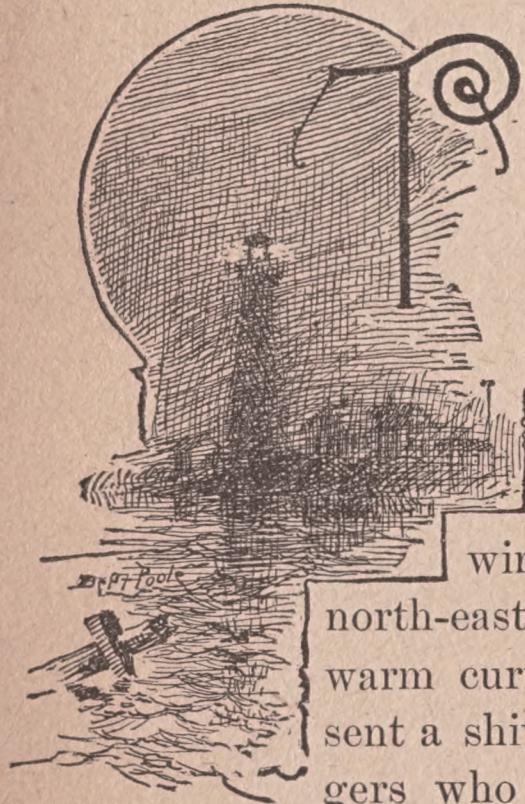
Bravely, proudly, had she redeemed her pledge ; and few were the wiser that it involved so much. Only her father's impatient creditors, when their claims against him were promptly paid from some mysterious source, guessed anything approaching the unalterable truth.

But even as Reinhardt passed from the altar with his beautiful girl-wife leaning upon his arm, and the music of a joyous wedding march pealing about his ears, jealousy pointed a warning finger at some apprehensive danger lingering near. He felt his wife start involuntarily as her eyes met those of one who purposely loitered in the columned aisle, and had watched the ceremony with painful yet cynical interest. Surely he had seen that maliciously handsome countenance before. Yes, there was no mistaking the Andalusian beauty of those dreamy, dark eyes. It was the face of Juan the student.

CHAPTER III.

“From ocean’s bosom, white and thin,
The mists come slowly rolling in;
While yonder slender coast light, set
Within its wave-washed minaret,
Half-quenched, a beamless star and pale,
Shines dimly through its cloudy veil.”

—WHITTIER.



WO years later, lacking a few short weeks, Juan Fernandez stood upon the deck of a fog enshrouded steamer bound into Boston from his native land. It was early morning, with a cold, disagreeable wind blowing in from the north-east, and the change from the warm currents of the Gulf Stream sent a shiver over the two passengers who huddled together under the lee of the pilot-house for a glimpse of the city.

“I can’t see anything for the beastly fog, you know!” roared a portly, good-natured Britisher in the Cuban’s ear, making a trumpet of his hands, the better to drown the steady swish of the sea and the noise of the machinery. “It’s the only thing that reminds me of London since I left ‘ome.”

“True, señor,” replied the Cuban. “It is very

foggy ; when we finish our cigars, we had better go into the cabin."

" 'Ave it your own way, since you've been 'ere before, you know. Let's see — you told me, didn't you, that you had been to college somewhere in America ?"

" I graduated from Harvard, *señor*."

" Bless me ! did you, though ? That's 'ow you speak such blasted good Hinglish ; and if you didn't call me *señor* so much, you'd pass for a clever Yankee."

The Englishman turned out to be a jolly companion during the voyage, and being happily exempt from sea-sickness, his good natured raillery had a salutary effect upon those not so fortunate in this respect. Since the day the *Storm King* steamed away from Havana, leaving in the distance Moro Castle and its grim sovereignty, he and Juan Fernandez had spent much of the time together — generally in the gentlemen's cabin smoking and playing cards, as this seemed to be the usual means of relieving the tedium of life on shipboard. Sometimes, when importuned by the captain's little daughter, Juan would play a few preliminary notes on his guitar. Then, as the passengers crowded around him, he would favor them with a song in the pure Castilian tongue. But often his rich baritone was heard in the English airs he had learned at Harvard. These pleased his cockney friend best, and as the passenger list was largely made up of those who used the Saxon mode of speech — since beside Fernandez there were only some half-dozen Cuban

refugees aboard the steamer — he never failed of an appreciative audience at such times.

So with these seasons of musical diversion, the droll stories told by the Englishman — who signed himself Thomas Higgleton, brewer, of London — and the ingenious methods formulated by Hoyle for the dissipation of time, the voyage from Havana was rendered comparatively short, and, despite a day or two of rough weather, was one of pleasure to the *Storm King*'s passengers.

The fragrant weeds being nearly smoked out, Higgleton and his companion tossed their cigars overboard and prepared to leave the deck. A heavy sea was running, and the steamer rolled in a manner that made it difficult to keep one's feet without holding on to some immovable object. Suddenly a lurch to leeward threw the Englishman violently forward and against the rail.

Almost simultaneously Fernandez dealt a powerful blow upon the arm of a man who, with the agility of a tiger, darted toward the prostrate Englishman with a gleaming knife in his hand.

“Coward!” cried the Cuban as the knife was sent whizzing through the air.

The assailant was a sinister-looking fellow, and evidently a Spaniard. He, with a companion of the same nationality, had followed the Englishman on deck and had been awaiting some such favorable opportunity to kill him, as now there was no one else on the scene but the young Cuban.

The other Spaniard, seeing Juan's interference, drew a knife and made a murderous lunge full at his

heart. To step aside, and cleverly interpose his foot so that the man stumbled, was the work of an instant, but it saved the Cuban's life. Such was the momentum of the villain's body, since he was of sturdy physique, that he continued headlong with the weapon in his hand.

There was a foreign oath—a feeble scream—and the knife was sheathed in a human heart!

The falling man, unable to avert the tragedy, had plunged the blade meant for Fernandez into the bosom of his accomplice—the one who had endeavored to perform a similar office for the Englishman. "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord. Surely retribution never came on swifter wings, nor with more awfulness of purpose, than to him whose life-blood dyed the Storm King's deck.

"Providence is just!" was Higgleton's only comment, pointing to the murderer, as the officers of the steamer, aware that a scuffle was going on, came hurriedly forward.

The assassin, for a moment, seemed turned to stone. His eyes were fixed intently on those glassy orbs staring at him in death! What were his thoughts, God alone can tell. Human agencies are all too weak to portray the feelings of such as he. To have murdered in cold blood the Englishman or Fernandez, it is easy to believe, would cost him no compunction; but to his superstitious soul, there must have been something preternatural in the accident which turned his hand against his confederate in crime. A shudder convulsed his frame as, stooping

over the body, he uttered a low cry in Spanish and devoutly made the sign of the cross.

“Ay de mi! He matado á mi hermano.”

“He says he has killed his brother!” the Cuban interpreted.

Suddenly arousing himself, and seeing that he was confronted by numerous witnesses of his guilt, and realizing that it was useless to battle for his liberty, the quivering wretch sprang over the rail and disappeared in the sea.

“No need of a jury for him,” said the captain of the *Storm King*, peering through the fog, “for he’ll never live in this sea to be tried for his crime. He’s far astern by this time, and bound for *Davy Jones*!”

Yet the officer at the wheel promptly rang his bell, the ponderous engines were reversed, and the steamer gradually slowed up, coming to a standstill about a half-a-mile from the spot where the Spaniard had leaped overboard. A boat was manned and lowered into the rough water of the outer harbor, but after a brief search it was returned and hoisted again to the davits—the crew, of course, having no tidings of the man for whom they had been searching.

The *Storm King*, with its ghastly burden becoming momentarily more distinct as the fog lifted and the morning light grew stronger, steamed cautiously into the harbor and headed for the dock.

It was indeed a resistless current that bore the desperate fratricide away from the steamer. Struggle as he might, strong swimmer that he was, the great rush of waters bore him down again and again.

Life was dearer now to this wretch, whose hands

were imbrued with a brother's blood, than it had ever been before. He had thrown himself into the sea, not with the desire to find therein a grave, but because it offered at least one chance of saving him from the hangman's noose. The chances, however, seemed to be that he would drown like a rat in sight of land.

A wave more boisterous than its fellows—that leaped and danced in its wild carousal among the billows—was bearing down upon him with overwhelming force. He saw it coming, and, like an experienced surf bather, tried to avoid it by a quick, sidelong dive, but in consequence of the buffeting he had undergone, he was physically weak and unable to cope with this new danger. Even while nerving himself for the plunge the wave broke over him, and he fell back like some insensate object upon the water, at the complete mercy of the currents that prevailed along the frowning coast.

Brief as was the period before insensibility intervened, it was of sufficient duration for him to realize that he was drowning, and the scenes and events of years passed in kaleidoscopic array before his tortured vision. Brilliant flashes of strange, weirdly-colored light, scintillated about him and illumined the deep recesses of ocean, rendering doubly fearful the horrors that awaited him below.

It seems to be a peculiar phase of death by drowning, and one testified to by people who have narrowly escaped that fate, that the mind revisits the remotest scenes occurring in the childish epoch ; and before the soul takes its flight it mingles again, as it

were, with the dear ones who watched its growth from infancy.

So with the Spaniard. The sunny, vine-clad hills of Spain ; his mother's face, lit by that sweet radiance which only the brow of a mother discloses ; the mountaineer's song, as he drove his flocks at sun-down along some craggy, winding foot-path ; his own happy, careless boyhood, with its joys and aspirations : all these arose before him in that delirium of death as he drifted into unconsciousness.

But at the last, dragging him down, down, down—like some vengeful Nemesis sent from ocean's caves—the phantom of his murdered brother, ghastly pale and bleeding as he had seen him last, clutched his throat and bore him company.

* * * * *

A low, deeply-laden sail boat, with a rough-looking, sleepy-eyed man at the oars to make additional headway against the tide, now claims the reader's attention. At daybreak it had put out from a small island near the coast, and by dint of persistent tacking, so that the dingy sail might get the benefit of the wind, and the sleepy-eyed man's exertions with the oars, the boat had made fair progress up to this time.

The tiller was held by one whom the man at the oars frequently addressed as Tom, a younger, smooth-faced individual, whose general character might not inaptly be summed up as fat and lazy without flying wide of the mark.

There was also a third person, a mere boy, enjoying the luxury of a nap, lying wrapped in an old sail

in the bow of the boat, while his companions kept a sleepy but watchful eye for the police tug, should it be prowling through the fog.

One accustomed to the methods of the light-fingered fraternity would at once class this craft and its occupants in the category of thieves. And aside from the fact they were returning from a thieving cruise among vessels anchored in the harbor, and had been driven by the police to take a roundabout course and spend most of the night on the island spoken of above, there was no especial interest attaching itself to the boat or those within it.

"Keep yer eye open for the p'lice, Tom, my boy!" said the rower at length, breaking a long period of silence.

"I'm a-doin' of it, dad," replied the other, removing his hand from his mouth only long enough to make answer, then hastily clapping it back again.

"We're havin' a hard time of it this trip," the former continued, essaying to keep up the conversation.

"Yes," was the monosyllabic reply. And, as before, the hand rapidly closed over the orifice in Tom's face.

"No tellin' when a steamer'll run us down — the fog's so heavy on the water."

"That's so." The fat youth at the tiller showed no encouraging signs of becoming communicative.

"If the wind rises, we'll get swamped and lose all our night's work. And its a hard earned load, too." The hand was again raised just the least bit, and Tom vouchsafed a mournful reply in the affirmative.

"Or we may strike a rock,—and smash'll go the boat!" his sire continued, casting about for other gloomy thoughts.

"Sure," the manipulator of the tiller managed to ejaculate between two rows of very firmly set teeth.

"Take yer hand off'n yer mouth and talk like a man!" He had tired of his son's experiment of talking through his teeth. "Ye'd be a fine chap to get shipwrecked with, wouldn't ye, now? I've bin talking my prettiest to ye, but its no use. Ye sit there like a wooden Injun, and only mumble to me."

"Its my lungs, dad." A feeble cough, necessitating deep inspirations on Tom's part, was meant by him to lend truthful force to his words. "I'm afeered to breathe in this fog. I had my fortune told yesterday by a Gypsy, and she told me I'd be likely to die of consumption. I can feel the dampness a-crawlin' down inside of me now. Shouldn't wonder if I had a hem'rage or something, before we get out'n this scrape."

"Tom, yer a big chump!" said his father angrily. "Fortune tellin' aint no good. You've got about as much chance of havin' consumption as I have of bein' an alderman. I'll wake up Dandy, then. The kid's got a tongue in his head, and I want to talk with somebody."

Suiting the action to the word, he aroused the sleeper by a vigorous touch of his foot, which he repeated with increasing force until the boy, gradually coming to a realizing sense of the situation, sat bolt upright and dug his fists into his eyes in the endeavor to get thoroughly awake.

"Tend that sheet, yer fat idjot!" cried the man at the oars, as his son let go the sail and peered over the side of the boat. Simultaneously a slight shock, as if the craft had struck lightly on a sunken reef, was felt by them both. "There, now you've done it! Struck ker-smash on a hunk o'rock."

Tom, unmindful of his father's words, was grappling with some object in the water, which in its upward progress on the current had come in contact with the boat, and which the strong tide was bearing out to sea.

It took the shape of a drowning man, till, little by little, as the young fellow's brawny arms drew the limp figure into the boat, was disclosed the death-like countenance of the Spaniard, who only a short time before had plunged from the steamer.

"Here's a go, dad!" Tom had suddenly found his tongue and forgotten the Gypsy's prophecy. "We's run into a dead corpse. What'ud we better do with him, since we's pulled him aboard?"

Inhuman as it may seem, the two thieves decided to drop the dead man into the sea, after they had rifled the body of all valuables. Like rude Cæsars they exacted tribute from the waves, and were governed by no considerations save those of self-aggrandizement.

An inventory of the Spaniard's personal effects revealed no very considerable amount of booty. A small amount in gold, two fractional tickets in the Havana Lottery, a quaint silver watch, several pocket trinkets of no appreciable value, and a return ticket to Cuba, made up the list of valuables as they were hurriedly appraised.

One article alone escaped their eyes: a signet ring, surmounted by a tiny serpent, with the name *Alveraz del Marco* engraved on the inner side of the band, which the man wore on the little finger of his right hand. This fell to the lot of the boy who had been asleep in the boat, and was by him adroitly slipped from the stiff, icy finger of the drowned man, to be quickly concealed in the capacious depths of his trousers pocket. And in the person of this young thief, as a glimpse is caught of his face under the fisherman's hat, is recognized Dandy the little hunchback, to whom the reader has been introduced in the opening chapter of this story. The ring was noticeable because of its curious setting, and worth a neat sum of money, but with Dandy its intrinsic value was of small consequence in comparison with the pleasure of possessing such a bit of jewelry.

The body was quickly rifled, since the morning was gradually growing lighter, and the thieves were in fear of being discovered.

"I've thought of what to do with the body," said Tom, pausing in the act of pushing the dead man over the side of the boat.

"Tell it quick, then," replied his father, looking around nervously.

"Sell it to the doctors up at the hospital."

"What for sonny?"

"For to cut up, o'course. They buys dead men sometimes, so's to let the students see how they's put together."

"Enny money in it?" asked the other shrewdly. "Its a good deal o'risk, and we may get nabbed by the coppers."

"Not if we's careful. All we've got to do is to cover him up in the bottom of the boat, and let Dandy sit on him. Nobody'll ever know what we've got, and we can run the boat up under the wharf when we get in. Doctors allus pays well if they wants a good skeleton."

"All right, sonny. 'Taint our fault the man got drowned, and I s'pose the stooidents needs him. You and Dandy cover him up. He won't ketch cold in the fog if he's tucked in snug."

The man laughed softly at his own grim sarcasm, and seating himself in the stern of the boat, as the wind was beginning to freshen, he took his son's place at the tiller while Tom and the hunchback hid the silent burden from view, in their haste giving the body many a rough thump against the boat, which had about the same effect as if they were endeavoring to resuscitate a person partially drowned, since this sort of usage caused the water to be freely expelled from the Spaniard's lungs.

"Now, Dandy, we want you to sit down, and if anybody asks what we've got here, tell 'em we're fishermen and bound into port." The trio, by the way, wore the heavy oil-skin coats and sou'westers common to fishermen, since they served as an effectual disguise and enabled them to carry on their calling with greater immunity from detection.

"You're a green hand in this business yet, and musn't open your face without you has to."

"I don't want to sit on a dead man!" the hunchback protested whiningly. "He'll haunt me like a ghost."

"Aw, shut up!" the man at the rudder interposed. "Don't talk about ghosts now. He can't hurt you, anyway; and you won't see him, all wrapped up in that old sail."

"I'll turn his face down," said Tom, suiting the action to the word. "There now," addressing himself to the hunchback, "sit down, or I'll tan your hide—ye contrary little cuss! His eyes aint looking at ye now."

Thus intimidated into submission to their wishes, Dandy did as he was told, and the boat was propelled up the bay, still enveloped in the fog that the wind was driving landward.

They had not proceeded a hundred yards before a startling discovery was made. In the water near their boat was a veritable man-eating shark. This vulture of the sea, keen of scent and guided by some mysterious agency in the wake of death, could be seen swimming in circles only a few rods distant, now and then coming close to the boat, so that its terrible jaws, as the fish turned on its sides as if to seize an imaginary prey, were plainly visible to the frightened thieves. Its presence so near the land argued the correctness of sailor superstition, and that, emboldened by hunger, the fish had followed the Storm King in from the Gulf. It seemed, indeed, an omen of ill luck to those who had snatched the Spaniard from the sea, and the elderly thief was emphatic in declaring that their safety lay in getting rid of the corpse, in which his son, after a while, yielded an unwilling acquiescence.

"If the shark eats him, we aint to blame, be we

sonny?" was his father's only apology for what they were about to do. "So dump him over afore something happens to us. Easy now, e-a-s-y, sonny. It won't do to make a noise over it, with the tug cruisin' round in the fog."

A low cry from the little hunchback, who was crouching in the bow of the boat, and had his eyes riveted on the face of the Spaniard as his companions turned the body over, startled the others and drew their attention for the moment to him.

"Hist, boy! D'ye want us to drop you over, too?" admonished the elder Barlow.

For answer, Dandy pointed tremblingly to the Spaniard's face, in which a spasmodic twitching of the muscles, accompanied by a slight tremor of the body as the two men raised it in their arms, indicated that life was not yet extinct. The rough treatment administered to the Spaniard, in the endeavor to stow him quickly away in the boat, had been the means of revivifying the poor wretch, thus saving him from a fate worse than drowning.

"The man aint dead!" persisted the boy. "See! he's gasping for more air," Dandy continued, as his companions saw unmistakable signs of life.

"Throw him overboard, just the same!" was the heartless remark of the old man, at which Tom, who had produced a flask of liquor from his pocket, strongly demurred.

"Dad!" said the young fellow, looking his parent straight in the eye, "you's made a thief o' me, and I'm goin' to stick by ye. But I ain't the right kind o' stuff as what murderers is made of! I picked

this man up, and if he's got any life in him, which me and Dandy says he has, we'll land him somewhere and let him go, — or my name ain't Tom Barlow, that's all."

He busied himself over the half-drowned Spaniard, assisted by the little hunchback, and by a free use of the liquor on the Spaniard, together with persistent rolling and percussion of his body, they had the satisfaction of knowing they had rekindled the vital spark.

An hour from this time, having successfully eluded the police-boat, and being no longer menaced by the man-eater, the thieves ran their craft in under a long, dark wharf on the water-front; and after working the boat in and out among the slimy logs that supported the old structure, they reached a flight of steps communicating with the humble abode they dignified with the name of home.

The Spaniard, meanwhile, had been freely dosed with liquor and was beginning to take interest in the movements of his rescuers; but up to this time, either from his inability to converse with them, or from fear of being detected for the crime committed on the *Storm King*, he had remained mute and motionless in the boat as they came up the harbor. Now, however, he aroused himself and looked searchingly into the faces of his captors; for such indeed they were in fact as well as in name, since, to gratify his father's wishes, Tom had promised to keep the Spaniard a prisoner in the hope of a ransom from his friends. The fear that their hiding-place might be disclosed if they allowed him to de-

part without restoring the booty taken from him was perhaps the stronger motive for keeping him confined until they could learn what were his intentions toward them.

It was only when the two men, by each seizing an arm and pointing upward, indicated that he was to ascend with them to some unexplored region above, that he made a show of resistance. Physically he was weak from his buffeting in the sea, and the strength exerted by the thieves soon forced him up the steps, when he sank helpless at their feet on the narrow landing, and glared at them with wildly rolling eyes that bespoke a disordered brain.

"Open the door, old woman!" cried the elderly thief, "we're bringin' home a visitor this trip."

No one appeared in answer to this noisy summons, and he gave the stout, heavy-panelled door a vigorous kick, emphasizing his impatience by swearing softly to himself.

"I'm comin', Joey dear," a shrill feminine voice inside made answer.

"Dammit!" responded her liege lord in return, "don't I tell ye not to 'Joey-dear' me that way! Shove back the bolts and let us git in."

There was a sound of heavy bolts being drawn, a ponderous key turned in the lock, and the door swung back on its hinges, disclosing the owner of the voice to be a short, pleasant-faced woman, much inclined to obesity; in this latter respect she resembled her son Tom, and was evidently of an amatory temperament, if one could judge from the habit of interlarding her conversation with endear-

ing epithets, which, as has already been seen, her husband sometimes deprecated when in a sleepy condition.

"I'd just taken down the shutters," she said in apology for her delay in getting to the door, "and run out for a pitcher o' beer."

The thieves entered, dragging the Spaniard with them, and the door was shut and securely fastened as before.

"O!—beer," said Tom, catching up the foamy beverage and placing it to his lips. "I allers likes beer in the early mornin', and the doctors say its good to stave off consumption," adding, after a deep draught, "my lungs is miserable since I got my fortune told."

"Maybe som'un else has poor lungs, sonny," his father said by way of a gentle hint, as if suspicious that his need of refreshment would be forgotten. He gave a grunt of satisfaction when he received the pitcher, and on setting it down he expressed a desire that breakfast be prepared, adding that he was hungry as a camel.

The Spaniard was then coaxed into some dry clothes, which Mrs. Barlow, whose rough exterior hid a warm heart, had obtained from the meagre wardrobes of her husband and son. He had become quite passive again, but kept up an incessant jabbering in his native tongue, which was strangely unintelligible to the little group. By degrees it became plain to the thieves that the man was out of his head—the result no doubt, of his experience in the water. They, of course, knew nothing of him pre-

vious to the time his apparently dead body came in contact with their boat, and so had no knowledge of the Storm King's tragedy or that their prisoner had been one of its principal actors.

A short family consultation followed, and it was decided that he should be confined in a room above, where his chances of escape or of making his presence known to outsiders were equally improbable, pending a decision as to what they would do with him ultimately.

The building in which the Barlows were domiciled, as nominal keepers of a shop for traffic in junk and old metal, was a rambling, dilapidated store-house that had passed its prosperous days and was now unoccupied save by the junk dealer, who added largely to his profits by these thieving trips among the wharves at night, stealing whatever could advantageously be turned into money without exciting suspicion.

In these excursions, since he could go where they could not, the little street Arab whom the reader knows as Dandy was beginning to be a valuable confederate, and the thieving junk dealers were fast initiating him into their dishonest practices.

"You's gettin' old enough to earn an honest livin', Dandy," the elder Barlow would admonish him, "and you owes it to us to do it by hook or by crook." And the boy had promised his benefactors he would do as they wished.

"Besides, we's the only folks you know anything about," his foster-father invariably added, when reminding him of his duties toward him. "Why, you

was only a wee kid when your mother died, and she told us your dad was a soldier and got killed in the war. Poor thing ; she didn't tell us her name, nor how she got here that stormy night."

And this was all Dandy ever knew of his history. That he was a soldier's son, he somehow felt within him, was something to be proud of; and the child pictured out scenes of martial splendor, and battle-fields where opposing armies met in strife for the mastery, amidst the stirring music of bugle and drum, until it seemed more real than imaginary to his young mind. If, in these flights of fancy, little Dandy thought he too would be a soldier some day, he always burst into tears when he looked down at his long arms and remembered that he was a hunchback.

CHAPTER IV.

“O'er the desert sands of duty,
Eurylee,
Hope allures to isles of beauty,
Eurylee!” — DRIFTING SONGS.



HE Cuban and his English friend parted company the day following the Storm King's arrival, after they had reduced to writing their version of the tragedy that had taken place, in order that all facts bearing upon the matter might be transmitted in a formal way to the authorities, and to correct some errors in the accounts that had reached the public ear. The Englishman, however, showed a reluctance to talk much about the animus of his attempted assassination.

“One must have enemies, you know,” he evasively replied when Fernandez questioned him too closely.

“Yes, of course, señor,” the Cuban replied. “But you have got rid of two of them, señor. One will be buried to-morrow, and the other is at the bottom of the sea.”

“May he not have escaped?” asked his companion. “He was a strong swimmer, I have no doubt; and

the land was not far away, though we couldn't see it for the fog."

"I think not, señor. The tide has taken him out to sea by this time."

"He was probably some cut-throat who would have murdered me for a guinea," said the Englishman in dismissing the subject.

"I hope, señor," Juan replied, "you remember he was born in Arragon. Therefore, your enemy came from that country every true Cuban should bear arms against!"

The conversation was carried on in the Cuban's apartments at the hotel, where the two had gone directly they had left the steamer, and which Juan informed his friend was to be his home while he remained in the city.

"Oh, well, you Cubans are pretty much all rebels," laughed the old brewer softly, his keen eye noting the effect of his words upon his companion. "But that's neither here nor there; so don't get angry at an old man's joking. The little time I've spent in Cuba, however, convinces me the Spanish Don is a devilish poor ruler."

"Thanks, señor," returned Juan. "I am sad when I think how my countrymen neglect the cause of freedom!"

A few hours from this time they were saying good-bye at the train which was to bear the Englishman to the metropolis. They had a short while to spare before train-time, and it was when pacing up and down the platform, intently engaged in conversation, that the following incident occurred.

"You do not know me, señora?" The Englishman looked up to find his friend, with hat in hand, bowing low before an elegantly dressed lady, accompanied by a heavily moustached gentleman whose bearing was singularly free from all restraint and plainly bespoke a club man of the day.

"Surely, you have not forgotten Juan Fernandez?"

"Sir, this is presumptuous," was the indignant reply. "But an apology will atone, since you are laboring under a mistake."

"Pardon me," Juan returned quickly. "I am mistaken, it seems."

With a stately courtesy the lady acknowledged the Cuban's bow, and bidding good-bye to her escort of the luxuriant moustache, she entered a carriage in waiting and gave a peremptory order to the driver, which he obeyed by whipping his horses into a run.

"So you were mistaken, eh?" said the Englishman, when they had resumed their walk.

"Yes, señor. I thought I had met the lady in Havana, that is all."

"Fernandez," said the other with sudden interest, "'ow do you know this lady is not the person you thought her to be?"

"How do I know, señor?" laughed the Cuban. "Only by her failure to recognize me. Is not that enough?"

"It's a good reason if she isn't playing the policy game; refusing to know you because it best suits 'er purpose."

"You're getting suspicious," replied Juan. "Why should she wish to avoid me if it is she? At home

we were good friends indeed. I was often her escort at the bull fight, señor."

The manner of the Englishman at this moment is that of a man who does not feel quite sure he has made a startling discovery, but nevertheless thinks he has inadvertently stumbled upon information likely to prove useful.

"Ah! the bull fight — singular coincidence," he exclaimed under his breath, having reference more particularly to the Cuban's last statement. "I had forgotten that." Then aloud, he asked :

"The name of this lady? Was it"—

"She was known in Havana as Madame Beatrice," Juan replied. "She speaks your language well; perhaps you knew her in England?"

"Madame Beatrice," he repeated slowly, trying to recall if he had heard the name. "Don't think I ever 'erd tell of 'er before." His smile of self complacency, however, indicated that he knew more than he wished the Cuban to become cognizant of, and by common consent, since neither made further reference to the stranger, the subject was summarily dropped.

The Cuban, had he stayed to watch the New York express roll out of Boston, might have witnessed a puzzling move on the part of his friend. For no sooner had the two men separated, while yet the ding-dong of the bell gave the signal for belated travelers to accelerate their farewells, than Higgleton stepped from the train, made a hasty exchange of the checks for his baggage, and elbowed his way to a waiting-room that bore a look of desertion. He

glanced quickly around, and, finding himself the sole occupant of the apartment, proceeded to make a few alterations in his toilet before a mirror in the farther end of the room.

These consisted, first, in plucking off his iron-gray whiskers, which showed him to be a much younger man than he appeared in the beginning of our acquaintanceship; second, in the removal of a wig of corresponding color, but having slight pretensions to baldness, and a general re-arrangement of his make-up so far as could be done in so public a place.

The change seemed to please the pseudo brewer, as he cast a smiling glance at himself in the glass; and giving his typical British head-gear a squeeze between his hands, that article was instantly transformed into a low-crowned hat, through a clever combination of springs which only a genius could possibly devise.

"That is better," he soliloquized. "If the Cuban knows me now, he has a memory for faces uncommonly good. So, Thomas Higgleton, brewer, we are to sever relations for the present; you will go back to the world of imaginary people till you are wanted in the flesh, while I—well, my plans at this moment are of the most shadowy nature. One thing however, is decided upon: I must be near Fernandez; and to that end, as I am unacquainted with the town, it only remains for me to return to his hotel."

Those who had noticed the gouty old Englishman, while he was waiting for the train, would certainly never recognize the springy step and altered features of the individual who left the waiting-room ten min-

utes later. No denizen of the melodramatic stage, skilful in the art of disguising one's personality, could hope to accomplish the feat of "making up" in a better way or in a shorter time.

"Take me to the Parker House," was his order to a cabman, "and I'll pay you now, to save time at the other end." The fare was paid out of a guinea tendered by the Englishman, and he put the change in currency loosely away in an outside pocket, little dreaming that a pair of covetous eyes, whose owner alone had seen the difference in appearance effected in the waiting-room, were fixed upon him as he displayed his money.

It was while drawing a glove upon his shapely hand, that he felt a movement in the direction of his pocket. Your traveled man is quick to notice whatever in its nature is suspicious, and seems instinctively to feel the presence of pickpockets in a crowd, more especially if he has ever been the victim of these light-fingered workers. This, no doubt, accounted for the quickness with which the Englishman passed his hand down and firmly grasped the wrist of the person seeking to relieve him of his superfluous cash.

"So, my lad, you were trying to rob me, eh?" The tone was not unkind, neither was it so severe as it might have been had the thief proved some hard-featured miscreant, instead of a cringing little hunchback. For it was indeed little Dandy, taking his first lesson in pocket picking from Tom Barlow, who kept his fat proportions prudently on the outskirts of the crowd.

"Yes, I was!" owned up the boy frankly, looking in vain for help from his evil genius.

"And what do you expect me to do with you?" continued his captor, looking down pityingly into the childish face.

"Give me to the cops, I s'pose," was the resigned answer, "I'll have to go to jail, won't I, boss?"

A few spectators had been attracted by the conversation, but the throng hurrying past, eager to reach home and loved ones waiting to greet them there, were ignorant of the matter, and had no time to spend in idly gazing at the arrest of a street thief if they had known it.

"Not if I don't keep you here till the police come. But what'll you promise me if I let you go?"

"I'll promise not to tell the cops you're a bad egg," whispered the hunchback.

"I don't see how you know, anyway," laughed the Englishman, puzzled by the boy's promise, which, instead of being a pledge to abstain from stealing in the future, was really an attempt, and a successful one, as it proved, to bring about a compromise affecting the safety of both.

"Bad eggs," the hunchback continued, "allus wears whiskerses what they can take off — like them you's got in your pocket!"

It did not take the Englishman long to discover that he had been detected in his change of characters, for the few other questions he put to the boy convinced him it was politic to avoid any trouble with him. So he charged him solemnly to say nothing about the affair, and, having pledged him to secrecy with a bit of money, he entered the carriage and was driven rapidly away.

"I must cultivate that strange youth," he mused, while on his way to the hotel. "He knows the ins-and-outs of the city, and I may need his services some time."

He registered his name as Percival Hartley, and was assigned to the room he had vacated only a short time before. This was next to the Cuban's apartment, and since he was in the house to shadow Juan's movements, for reasons which will appear in the progress of this story, no more convenient arrangement could be desired. Here he locked himself in, to guard against interruption by any of those well-meaning people, who, while scorning to be guided through hotel corridors by a bell-boy, are in the habit of getting into the wrong room by mistake, and gave himself up to the completion of the changes that were to obliterate all traces of his former character. This did not take him long, so skillful was he in selecting from a varied wardrobe what would best suit his purpose, and when he descended to the office, in the hope of finding the Cuban chatting there as was his wont, Mr. Hartley would impress the average beholder as a man of leisure, not over forty years of age, with a smoothly shaven, good-natured face, possessed of a wiry frame and capable of great muscular activity, whose general characteristics proclaimed him an Englishman.

As the reader has doubtless reasoned out, Percival Hartley, acting as a spy on the Cuban, had an object of prime importance in view — and that was to gain through Juan, who he felt must know more of the truth than he had revealed to him at the station,

some definite knowledge of the lady who denied the imputation that she was Madame Beatrice, when thus addressed.

* * * * *

A fire of coals burned brightly in the Cuban's room at the hotel, for it was spring weather, with the damp, chilly nights that are so unwelcome as harbingers of a backward summer. Before the fire, leaning his head on his hand in an attitude of reflection and deep cogitation, Juan sat reviewing the scene of the attempted assassination on the Storm King. The face of the dead man, in all its ghastly paleness, and wearing a look of evil that death itself could not efface, was there in the bed of coals ; but the other, the larger and keener looking of the two Spaniards — the accidental slayer of his brother — appeared not once in the panoramic vision unfolding before him.

"It is so strange," he soliloquized, "that I cannot see, as I saw it then, the face of him who knew why the Englishman's death is desired at home. Can he be a spy upon our little band of patriots ? If I had felt this suspicion on the steamer, the Spaniard should have killed him there ! But I must be patient till my return with the expedition that is to strike a blow for Cuba."

Outside the wind increased to a gale, and it was raining in fitful showers, while the night settled down dark and dismal over the city ; but the Cuban arose from his unhappy reflections, and after a few short turns up and down the room, as if struggling within himself to master some overpowering passion

that vexed his soul, he made preparations for going out into the storm.

"It's a wild night for such an errand," he mused, donning a heavy coat and throwing his mantle over his arm. "But her sweet smile lights me through the storm, and my heart is strong at the thought of seeing her again, though she will not know that I am feasting my soul upon her beauty. Oh, this love of mine! Will it never leave me — never let me forget you, Madelina?"

As the reader knows, the Cuban was not a stranger in the city. He had, therefore, no difficulty, despite the darkness of the night, in making his way toward Beacon Hill, without recourse to frequent inquiries of patrolmen or the hurrying pedestrians who jostled him in their haste. Once he met some friends of his college days, with whom he shook hands cordially and made an appointment for a future meeting; but on the plea of pressing business he soon disengaged himself and kept on his way, till he finally got beyond reach of interruption, and was passing beneath the shadow of the big dome so familiar to his eyes in other times. Here he turned, more mechanically than otherwise, in a direction he seemed to traverse with perfect ease.

Before leaving the hotel, a message had been delivered to the Cuban as he was standing in the corridor buttoning his semi-military cloak over his shoulders. This he read with an evident show of interest and surprise, and glancing hurriedly over the letter a second time as if to memorize its contents, Juan made a reply to the messenger.

The note was written in the musical language of his native land, but a free translation of its contents will give the English reader an idea of its import:

"A friend of Cuban liberty wishes an interview with Señor Fernandez to-night. *Do not fail to come.* Meet the bearer of this at what hour you may name, and he will conduct you aright."

There was no signature affixed to this mysterious missive, but the handwriting was plainly that of a woman. The Cuban was somewhat puzzled at its receipt, since he had not as yet made known his presence in America to anyone interested in the cause so dear to him, and had not understood that one of his countrywomen with authority to summons him in so peremptory a manner had expected to see him on his arrival. But he did not hesitate to tell the messenger he would meet him later and accompany him to the place of rendezvous.

"After all, it is best that I throw myself into the work at once," he reasoned, "for I need the stimulus of excitement to keep my thoughts from other themes. There is much to do before the expedition can start for Cuba, and my unhappy country needs me in her service."

The Cuban wrapped his mantle closer, as a sudden blast whistled through the leafless trees, and hurried on heedless of the big drops patterning down. He was young, robust, impervious to the wind and weather, and in the supple gracefulness of his figure, noticeable even as he stalked through the darkness with bowed head, there was that quality which indicated great powers of endurance and ability to

achieve the mastery in situations where trained muscles and steady nerves count for their full worth. This excellence of physical development, acquired during his life at Harvard, was in marked contrast to the weak, languid bodies of the young Cubans one meets in Havana, and told plainly of his American education and the assimilation of ideas peculiar to this western continent.

“At last I see the casket that holds my jewel! Juan exclaimed. “But I was a fool to come. There is no welcome for me here — except I can see the light of Madelina’s eyes!”

It will be noticed, as another peculiarity of the Cuban’s speech, that he invariably employed a Spanish termination for English names, which, to ears attuned to the melody of his voice, was certainly a not unpleasant innovation.

The very hopelessness of his quest to-night becomes apparent, when we know his object is to gain an interview with the beautiful Madeline of his youthful fancy. He sees the light within the home of Clifford Reinhardt, and pictures each charm of her who beautifies its stately halls, but is powerless to make the least of those charms his own, without transgressing the spirit of that decree fulminated by the Hebrew law-giver down through the ages: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife!” (Vain adjuration, O prophet of the curling beard! in these degenerate days of ours.) The street was well nigh deserted, and the Cuban stood immovable before the broker’s residence, like some pilgrim in silent adoration at a shrine he has journeyed far to look upon.

“I must see thee, Madelina!” is the cry of his heart. A sound of carriage wheels aroused the Cuban, and he had only time to shrink within the shadow of the portico before a liveried turn-out drew up at the curb. He waited breathlessly, hoping to see Mrs. Reinhardt alight from the vehicle, but in this he was disappointed.

In the flood of light streaming from the hall, the Cuban recognized the lady who alighted from the carriage, but the discovery was of so startling a nature that he staggered back in amazement.

“Madame Beatrice!” he exclaimed, “or I am dreaming! What can she be doing here? It was she, then, whom I saw with Señor Brawn at the train — and in the company of that man, too!”

The carriage disappeared through the darkness, awaking the quiet of the hour by the rumble of its wheels along the court yard, and the Cuban left his hiding place to take up a position nearer the window, whence he could look into the luxuriously furnished room, lighted by colored chandeliers, and presenting to-night an inviting contrast to the scene without. Here he stood in lonely contemplation among the shadows.

“She is not there — my Madelina,” he assured himself after a brief inspection of the apartment, which was the general living-room of the broker’s household. But of late the young wife seldom crossed its threshold, because of a coldness that had arisen between her and Clifford’s mother — a proud old dame of patrician airs — who, from the day Madeline succeeded to the title of mistress of this

ancestral home, had looked with marked disfavor upon her son's marriage with a penniless girl.

There had been no open emnity between the two women, but Madeline felt the poignancy of each blow inflicted upon her by the other; and thus, little by little, as the breach widened and Reinhardt ungenerously sided against his wife by allowing his filial devotion to blind him to his duty as a husband, she grew cold and indifferent to their censure or praise. A barrier of silence at times isolated her from those whose love and indulgence it was her right to expect, as completely as though unyielding walls of adamant hemmed her in. The birth of little Clifford, under circumstances such as these, was indeed a heaven-sent blessing, for it gave her something to live for — something to link her with the future and impart a new sweetness to life.

The broker sat facing his mother and the new arrival, whom, adopting the language of the Cuban, we will call Madame Beatrice, while an air of elegance pervaded the room and invested its occupants with a charming personality.

Madame Beatrice, relieved of her traveling wraps, had thrown herself upon a low divan at the feet of her hostess, and laid her pretty golden head in the old lady's lap. The soft light disclosed each graceful outline of her exquisite figure in a way that did not escape Reinhardt's admiring glance. Beatrice, like a tired, much petted child, smiled archly up into his face, and dropped her eyes tantalizingly as he passed to the smoking-room, having excused himself on the plea that it was already beyond the time for his evening cigar.

"Oh, what perverse creatures you men are!" And a little ripple of laughter followed Beatrice's remark. "To prefer the solitude of your cigar to our society, and at a time when we are planning for your happiness. But, after all, a masquerade—or *bal masque*, as we Parisians call it—is not so difficult a thing to arrange without the aid of monsieur's judgment."

"A masquerade!" he said in surprise, returning to his mother's side. "I have not been honored with your confidence, it seems! And Madeline—does she know?"

"I did not think it necessary to consult her wishes, Clifford," his mother replied. "But you are at liberty to acquaint her with our plans, since I can see no reason why she should oppose them."

"I will do so to-night," he said, reflectively. "And believe me, madame, he continued, "I am grateful to you for your interest in the matter as my mother's guest. It is well to break the monotony of our home life, I think; for you must be aware it is sometimes lonely in our little household, since we are a family of quiet tastes."

"Lonely, monsieur!" Beatrice answered mockingly. "Have you not your wife and the little child? Ah, the pretty, pretty baby. And you lonely with them, monsieur!"

A pained look came over his face, as he replied to her raillery as best he could, and, excusing himself a second time, he retired to his smoking-room and lighted a cigar.

"And you lonely with them, monsieur!" kept

ringing in his ears, till the very walls seemed to echo Madame Beatrice's words. "Ah, no wonder she asked that question," he said to himself, "for she could not know."

He loved the solitude of this one room, where only the privileged few dared to break the master's reverie over his cigar, and to-night with the rain beating against the window-pane, and the wind sighing drearily over the hill, there was a deep sense of comfort and security within its walls, lit up with dancing light from a wood fire in the grate.

It may be that Reinhardt was not so happy as he looked, sitting there alone in the dim light of his smoking-room, for men are strange creatures in moments of listlessness and ease, but visions of a masquerade, with its inseparable attractions of music, lights and flowers, swaying forms and costumes wonderful, are pleasant companions on a stormy night when one is oppressed by a lonesome feeling, such as he had confessed sometimes took possession of him. He dwelt upon the scene till his head dropped back among the cushions; his cigar went out through sheer neglect, fell from his fingers, and was speedily metamorphosed into a mass of white ashes upon the hearth; and amid a clash of music, and the sound of slippers feet in merry unison, he gradually lost control of his waking faculties, till the voices of his mother and Beatrice, heard in conversation on the other side of the hall, became a confused murmur and no longer reached his ear.

"It is indeed kind of you, dear Madame Beatrice," old Mrs. Reinhardt was saying, "to interest

yourself in the matter, and I am sure the masque will be a brilliant affair. Ah, the glory of the old days is departed ! Since Clifford's marriage I have mingled so little in society, it will seem odd to have the house filled with company, you know ; but, then, as you say, it is something the Reinhardts owe to their position."

"A positive duty, indeed," replied her listener. Madame had by this time seated herself in the chair the broker had vacated, and as the two women were quite alone, the vivacious Beatrice took advantage of the fact to stretch her dainty slippers upon the fender, while one hand grasped her skirts to keep them from the fire. In this position her tongue ran glibly on about the masquerade, and she disclosed a managerial tact — a capacity for overcoming difficulties in the way — that completely fascinated the broker's mother, whose vanity she flattered by occasionally yielding some point in the arrangements to a suggestion she had made.

"And it will seem like home to you, Beatrice," the old lady said at length. "Something like your beautiful Paris."

"Ah, madame," said Beatrice with a little sigh, "those were happy days for me ; for though, as you already know, it was at Cannes we were married — I and Henri de Bouvillé — the sweetest memories of my lonely widowhood are those which recall our life in Paris. Ten years ago ! I was twenty then — and men called me pretty, madame. Bah ! the Frenchmen lose their heads over plump figures, and rosy cheeks, and sparkling eyes."

"It would be no wonder," her listener interrupted, "if all women were like you."

"Oh, madame, you are very kind to me! And how often I will think of you when we are separated."

"But that will not be very soon, Beatrice, for you know you have promised to stay with me a long while yet."

"Yes, if I do not go back to Cuba. You forget that my mission here is to kindle the fires of patriotism! In other words, that I am an emissary from the revolutionary party in Havana, and am quietly winning the support of their friends in America. A rebel, you may say. Yes, madame, a rebel against Spanish tyranny and misgovernment!"

"Bravo! bravo!" cried the old lady, clapping her hands. "I admire your spirit, Madame Beatrice. You must enroll me among your devoted followers."

Then the Cuban, from his post of observation outside the window, saw the two women leave the room together, and, rightly supposing the apartment to be deserted, he noiselessly raised the sash and entered.

"Even this I do for thee, Madelina!" he whispered, glancing nervously around. "Like some thief in the night, I risk all for the happiness of seeing you again. Fool! that I am. Ay, worse than fool; only a knave would enter another man's house in a way like this. But if she is here, I will look upon her beauty ere I go."

Softly, with almost noiseless tread, the Cuban moved from room to room, in his search for Madeline, but not daring to venture up stairs, he was, of

course, unsuccessful in his search, for Mrs. Reinhardt was at that moment crooning a lullaby to her baby in the nurse's room. He saw a half-opened door, and on tiptoe approached the room.

Some strange influence drew him toward a figure before the fire — an irresistible impulse to scan the features of the person asleep within the room. A thrill of surprise shot through the Cuban's nerves, when he had advanced a few steps nearer, to recognize his old enemy Clifford Reinhardt. The broker slept soundly ; and the Cuban stood over him, with folded arms, reviewing the circumstances of their last meeting, which had taken place at Madeline's old home, the residence of Gregory Maitland. Then the broker had triumphed cruelly over the young Cuban, and, through the powerful influence Reinhardt exerted over his father-in-law, Juan had been expelled from the family in humiliation.

“Once you were the victor, Señor Reinhardt !” the Cuban muttered over the sleeping man, “ and I cringed beneath your blow.” (A fierce light shone in his eyes, and the hot Castilian blood leaped within his veins.) “But now revenge is in my grasp — if I choose to take it ! One strong, swift stroke of my arm” — (the Cuban's hand mechanically sought some weapon beneath his mantle) — “ and Madelina will wear the veil of widowhood !” The measured ticking of an ancient time-piece in the corner was not more audible to him than the beating of his own heart.

“And then — ay ! and then — Holy Mother ! my heart is leagued with the fiends of murder !”

CHAPTER V.

“Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me,
While my little one, while my pretty one,
Sleeps!” — TENNYSON.



ILENCE deep and oppressive — the dim firelight — Reinhardt's oblivion of danger — the hatred existing between the two men — furnish the outlines of a strange picture, the central figure of which is youth struggling with the terrible passion of revenge.

“Santa Maria! it has passed — and I thank thee!” murmured the Cuban, when the momentary danger that overshadowed the sleeper had gone, leaving him humbled in the presence of the invisible inquisitor conjured by his religious training.

It was a most impressive spectacle, this scene where the beautiful belief of the Cuban's creed, which teaches man that his every thought and act is

known to the Virgin Mother, had saved him from the commission of a crime. But that the conflict had been hard, and attended with physical suffering, was attested by the beaded perspiration that stood out on the Cuban's forehead like drops of dew. He regained his self-possession at an opportune moment, for just then Reinhardt moved uneasily in his sleep.

"What if he should wake and find me here?" the Cuban asked himself. What, indeed, but a struggle between two infuriated men — and its ending in death, perhaps, to one or both? Juan had passed through one paroxysm of vengeful feeling, but his guardian angel, which even then hovered near with peace-folded wings, might not save him from periling his soul if he should stand face to face again with his successful rival.

On the threshold of the room he paused to listen before attempting to reach the window through which he had gained entrance to the broker's home. The faint, yet unmistakable rustle of a woman's garments, coming nearer and nearer, reached his strained ear. No sound of a foot-fall on the richly carpeted floor indicated who the person approaching might be; yet it could be no one but Madeline, he assured his eager soul.

The Cuban's suspense gave way to mingled astonishment and fear when, without a glimpse of her coming — only that soft, insidious, rustling sound — the drapery that hid another entrance to the room was drawn aside and he stood confronting Madame Beatrice.

No matter how well trained a woman's nerves may be, it is the prerogative of her sex to cry out at any sudden and unexpected turn of affairs. Even Madame Beatrice, cool-headed adventuress and woman of the world, could not suppress a little scream, so complete was her surprise to find that the man she stood in fear of — the man who, from his knowledge of her career in Havana, could by the slightest word, perhaps, destroy her carefully planned schemes — was dogging her footsteps under the very roof where he might do the most harm. She could scarcely believe her senses ; and, as if she were suffering from some phantasmal influence, the woman drew back from the uplifted drapery, which she still clutched nervously in her hand. But for the quick action of the Cuban, who saw the danger and effectually muffled her head beneath his mantle, her second outcry would have been disastrous in its effect.

"Hush ! madame," he whispered sternly, and forced her in his strong grasp away from the room where Reinhardt dreamed before the fire. "It is I, — Juan !" She was now passive in his arms, but her bosom heaved convulsively, and the Cuban felt her warm breath upon his cheek as he removed the mantle and supported her a moment upon his breast.

"Why have you come here?" she demanded fiercely, speaking now in the Spanish tongue. "Could you not wait until I explained my refusal to recognize you this afternoon, without following me to this place?"

"I follow you?" replied Juan. "Really, I did

not know you had the honor of Señor Reinhardt's acquaintance!"

"Are you telling me the truth; or are you only seeking to impose upon my fears?"

"As true as that your husband was killed at Cannes," said the Cuban earnestly.

"Don't speak that way here!" she interrupted nervously. "I wish to be known as Beatrice de Bouvillé — the widow of a French volunteer who was killed in the Cuban war. But tell me, since you did not know I was here, what brought you to this house."

"I came to see Madelina — Señora Reinhardt," said Fernandez huskily, knowing it was useless to prevaricate, and having little to fear from Madame Beatrice.

A wicked light shone in the woman's eyes as she raised them to the Cuban's face. He understood the meaning of her scrutiny, as well as if she had said in so many words: "You love Señora Madelina!" Madame Beatrice's courage returned now that she had discovered the Cuban's secret, and could protect herself by this knowledge.

"So, my brave Juan," was her reply, "it is the proud señora, then, who admits you to her husband's house on stormy nights, when the wind shrieks to drown the noise of your coming?"

"No! Beatrice," hissed the Cuban savagely. "Seek not to cast dishonor on the señora. She is innocent and pure. I alone am guilty — for I came, unannounced, by yonder window. See! — look for yourself, if you will not believe me."

"Yes, the window is open," she returned with a little laugh, half suppressed and nervous. "But that does not absolve you, my young Lothario; neither does it free her from suspicion."

"Curse your slandering tongue!" said the Cuban. "You force me to a confession of my boyish passion for Madelina, that I may protect her honor as becomes a man. We were friends in my student days — when I was a wild, reckless fellow; and her young beauty fascinated me as only innocence itself can fascinate one who sees vice in its gilded character. She was kind to me — like a sister; and I, poor fool, learned to love her as I never loved woman before — yes, as I shall never love again!"

"A romance of the heart," interrupted Madame Beatrice. "I wonder what the gay *señoritas* of Havana would say to your story."

"Will you hear me out?" demanded Juan angrily. "There is no time to waste in words, for I must leave this house unseen."

"Very well, go on. You need to be brief, however."

"I will be brief, since there is little more to say. Time served only to make my love for Madelina more intense — more noble — more as love should be. But one day, when I had asked her hand in marriage, what did I hear? — yes and from her father's lips! — what, indeed, but that she was betrothed to the rich broker! Sold to save her family from beggary. And me — Juan the student — well, I was poor then, Beatrice, and the *señor* counted his riches by thousands!"

Madame Beatrice, who had become an interested listener to the story, turned suddenly pale and trembled with excitement. There at her feet, where it had fallen unperceived from beneath the Cuban's mantle — its polished blade shining in the gaslight upon the yielding carpet in the room — lay a small jewelled dagger of antique design, evidently the handiwork of some Moorish craftsman of a barbarous age.

"And now you would murder him!" she hissed in his ear. "In cold blood, beneath his own roof; — while he sleeps unconscious of danger!"

"No! no! — Not that, madame. It was only the temptation of a moment — and I crushed it out. I came here with no thought of murder in my heart. I wished to speak once more with Madelina, before leaving her forever!"

"It is false," she cried. "Had I not come, you would have murdered him! Ah, don't I know you Cubans well enough for that? See! — there at your feet is the dagger which would have freed your love from her alliance! Juan Fernandez, we now have cause to fear each other; but you keep my secret, and I will keep yours! And now, if you would be safe — go! There is danger every moment you are here."

"But you do not comprehend me!" insisted the Cuban, stooping to pick up the weapon which, he quickly realized, had placed him in a compromising position and given the keen-witted adventuress an advantage which she was sure to seize upon.

"Go!" she cried, pale with fear. "There is

somebody coming, and you will be discovered ! You have no time to lose — and we will meet again."

The Cuban had barely reached the balcony, madame closing the window after him, when the broker's mother entered the room. Seeing that her guest was alone, the old lady stopped somewhat in surprise, much as one sometimes does when fancy plays a trick upon the ear.

" What, alone, Beatrice ? I fancied I heard your voice just now, as I came down the stairs."

" My voice, madame ? " — with a roguish shrug of her plump shoulders. " Perhaps you did, madame. Do you know, since seeing the play last night, I can't help some of its lines running in my head. I have been amusing myself in fancying that I were Bianca — you remember her great scene — saying to the wicked Count :

" No ! — hireling lord ;
I scorn the offer of your glittering gold ! "

" How do you like my acting, madame ? " A rippling laugh followed the question. " You think my voice tragic, my gestures natural, my passion wonderfully like Bianca's. *Chère amie !* — you think everything I do is right."

" But really, my dear, you are a fine actress ! Why, the Bianca of the play was not more realistic."

" That is indeed flattering, madame. But I had almost forgotten to ask for the carriage again, as I have an appointment to keep this evening with some friends interested in my work for Cuba's liberty."

" It is at your service, whatever the use you require of it, but the more readily if it will assist

you in your labors for unhappy Cuba ; for at heart, I confess to you, I am in full sympathy with the cause you espouse."

"And you can be a friend to Cuba, madame. You have great wealth, and with gold one can buy liberty even ; for when we have money for soldiers, ammunition, and the expense of another campaign, an expedition will leave these shores to join in the cry of '*Cuba Libre!*' and wrest the sceptre from the Spaniards !"

"Ah, yes," old Mrs. Reinhardt returned with a sigh. "But I dread to lose you. If Clifford had only married a woman like you, things would have been so different. But as for that cold Madeline, with her soul wrapped up in her baby — who only married my boy for his money — why, do you know, Beatrice, sometimes I fancy we hate each other with the utmost cordiality !"

This speech fell harshly on the ear of an involuntary listener at the door. It was Madeline, come to seek her husband in relation to some new demand made by the servants, and who, seeing only the two women together, had drawn back at the threshold to avoid interrupting them.

"Ah !" she thought, "is not this the truth ? We are indeed learning to hate each other ! But what am I to do ; — what can I do, that will make peace between us ?"

Too proud to play the eavesdropper, Madeline hurried away from the room and left her mother-in-law and Madame Beatrice to finish the conversation alone. Then, going in search of her husband, she

found him still asleep before the fire, which now burned low and smoldered on the hearth. A look of weariness overshadowed his handsome face, and to his wife's mind, a sense of isolation suggested itself even amid the comforts surrounding him. The cares of business, the woriments that attend the transaction of matters involving and affecting, through the intricate channels of finance, many fortunes beside his own, had harrassed him of late she knew; but she was not his confidante, as were so many wives who sustained their husbands by words of sympathy and love, and she had no place in his thoughts at these times. This reflection, while it made her less happy, served to kindle a tenderness and pity in her heart. The true woman was shining through the thin veneer of society manners and studied indifference.

Madeline did what she had not done since her marriage day at the altar — kissed her husband voluntarily and unasked. It was just the lightest touch of her lips to his forehead, but it aroused the sleeper. He did not wake, though his sleep was broken, and his wife, in anticipation of the name that would be spoken, controlled her first impulse to leave his side, for she saw his lips move and knew he was dreaming. Would it be baby's name? she wondered, or her own? But the words she heard drove her — maddened at the very thought of another's usurping her place in his dreams — to the solitude of her own room, where she indulged in woman's prerogative of tears, and embittered her spirit against the whole race of Reinhardts — excepting the tiny representa-

tive of the name, who, struggling in the folds of a dainty night-gown, was then lustily resisting his nurse's attempts to rock him to sleep.

"Beatrice," murmured the broker in his sleep, "a pretty, pretty name."

And when he awoke, a few minutes later, the subject of his dream — Madame Beatrice, smiling, wicked and beautiful — stood before him. She was dressed for the street, and at that moment was engaged in buttoning a glove on her dainty hand. Seeing the broker's surprise, and conscious of the ardent gaze he bestowed upon her, she made haste to excuse herself for intruding at this time.

"I am so sorry, monsieur, to have disturbed your nap! But I did not know you were asleep" — which was a falsehood — "or I should have left a message with your mother."

"It really doesn't matter," he replied confusedly. "I mean your waking me up, you know. But I have neglected to ask what your message is."

"Only that I may be late to-night, monsieur; and should the storm increase during the evening, you had better not send the carriage before eleven. The poor animals, could they speak, would thank me, I know, for not letting them stand in the rain such a night as this."

"You are very considerate, madame." The broker in the interval of conversation had stepped to the window and drawn the curtain aside. "It's indeed an uncomfortable night for man or beast to be out. The wind is high, and the sky is black as ink — not a star to be seen anywhere! I only

regret that you find it imperative to keep an appointment at such a time."

Madame Beatrice acknowledged this by a look of gratitude, and continued her efforts to clasp the glove over a plump white wrist, without avail. Then petulantly, with just the least pout of her lips, she held the hand out to Reinhardt in her pretty, beseeching way.

"A small service, madame — a mere trifle only," he said as with a courtly grace he buttoned the glove and received her profuse thanks. "But let it be an earnest of my willingness to render a greater service, should occasion offer."

The entrance of his mother cut short any further exchange of pleasantries. A servant announced that the carriage was at the door, but discreetly omitted to say the coachman was swearing like a trooper for having to take his horses out again. So the old lady bustled about and got Beatrice's wraps for her, while Reinhardt stood by and rendered whatever little service he could. He was, Madame Beatrice assured herself, manifesting great solicitude for her comfort, which did not end till he had conducted her to the carriage, closing the door to keep out the rain, and cautioning the driver to be careful lest the horses stumble in the dark.

Leaning back among the cushions, Beatrice de Bouvillé, with half-closed eyes, indulged in castle-building as the carriage rolled along.

"Where is your mistress, Mary?" the broker asked of Madeline's maid when he had gone to his wife's room and found it deserted. "I wish to speak with her alone."

"If she isn't in her room, then she must be with nurse, sir. Baby's been fussing all the evening, I heard nurse say."

As Reinhardt neared the nurse's room, the door of which stood slightly ajar, he heard Madeline singing the baby to sleep. The melody was only a sweet, simple lullaby, such as mothers love to croon; but the singer's heart was in her song. Reverently the broker listened to the song; nor did he disturb her till its last notes had died away. His wife's seeming happiness, her contentment with life and its surroundings, was to him a very pleasing thought.

"Madeline," said her husband, when he had made known his presence in the room, "I wish you would sing more to baby than you do. I love to hear you singing those sweet old lullabys, and besides, a mother's voice is the first music a child's unfolding nature should learn to love."

She turned to look at him with tears in her beautiful eyes. Her husband's words had recalled the voice of the mother she had followed to the grave so soon after her marriage.

"Yes—and I remember a voice I shall hear no more on earth," she replied. "But you wished to speak to me." There was now no tenderness in her tones, for she heard again Clifford's admiration for a name he had no right to use in such a familiar way. "Here, nurse," she continued, "you may take baby now; he's fast asleep."

A frown darkened the broker's face. He did not fancy this inevitable interruption on his wife's part whenever he so far forgot himself as to lapse into a

lover's mood. But there was no help for it, he thought, and so he at once changed the subject.

"The matter uppermost in my mind," he began, "is one designed for our mutual pleasure, I am led to believe, or else I should not depart from my purpose to hold aloof from society."

"Indeed?" The reply was commonplace enough, but despite her apparent indifference, Madeline was wondering what it could be. "As I am not an adept in the art of guessing riddles, perhaps you will enlighten me."

"There is no riddle involved," he said impatiently, rising and pacing slowly about the room with hands deep in his pockets — a habit very common to him when disturbed in mind. "I wish, Madeline, you would be sensible about these things. A man can't always be expected to address his wife in the language of the drawing-room."

"Oh, well, there is scarcely any need of losing your temper, Mr. Reinhardt. Go on with what you have to say."

"I thought it best to tell you they — my mother and Madame Beatrice, you know — are planning for a masquerade. The details are not yet arranged, which will account, you see, for your not knowing it before. Of course your co-operation, or at least your indorsement of the project, will be necessary to its success."

"And why, pray? In other things I am not consulted; your mother fairly ignores my existence, I may say! How, then, does it become imperative that I should enter into her private arrangements?"

"Because you are my wife, Madeline, and mistress here. There must be a hostess, you know, to do the honors for the guests."

"Then, if I understand you, I am expected to save the masquerade from disaster by lending my presence and consent?"

"Exactly; that is precisely what I mean. For if you stubbornly refuse to appear, and thus place me in an embarrassing position before my friends — why, the whole thing must be summarily dropped. I have made up my mind to that point, and there the matter stands."

Madeline had turned away indifferently and resumed a half-finished novel. Her husband went to the window and stared vacantly out into the darkness. Thus a period of silence came between them, under cover of which both sought to collect their thoughts for another colloquy. Madeline, suddenly raising her eyes from her book, was the first to speak.

"This masquerade we were discussing," she began, "is it anything you really wish to occur?" He wondered at her question.

"Yes," he replied, "if it can be done with credit. People in our position, you know, are expected to respond in a greater or less degree to the calls of society. And aside from this consideration, it seems to me it will make our own lives happier — less lonely, if nothing more — if we mingle with the world."

"It is kind of you to consider my wishes before those of the others interested. So make your plans

with the assurance that I am in sympathy with them."

Thus the *bal masque* was to occur under pleasanter auspices than Reinhardt had imagined, for his wife had not only assured him that she would assist in making it the success of the season ; but, indirectly, had expressed her anticipation of the enjoyment in store for her.

"But I ask as a favor," she continued, "that you will make no inquiries from me, or from those who may share my confidence, as to what costume I am to appear in at the masquerade."

"Madeline, do you really mean that I am to be debarred from the pleasure of knowing who, among the fair women in the dance, is the queen of them all — my wife ?" He drew closer and took both her hands in his. She did not shrink from his caresses as she used to, but accepted them as her rightful homage.

The broker's love-making had not progressed very far in times past ; for, like a spectre rising between them, the memory of her words when she was betrothed under such painful circumstances seemed to haunt him in spite of himself. Would she ever learn to love him ? Time and time again — in the solitude of his lonely hours ; amid the perplexing details of business ; at the opera, where he sat beside her and marked the admiring glances cast in the direction of his box ; in some unexpected moment, when he saw her flitting from store to store in search of the daintiest fabrics for baby — he had asked himself this question. And then at home, while she played for

him and occasionally sang a favorite ballad, he had watched for the love that had been so long in coming.

"My God!" he would cry out in spirit, "is my sin so great that Thou withholdest this happiness from me!"

So he despaired at times; then he was jealous of all men. He had quarreled bitterly with one, Fernandez the Cuban. And all because of a wife's indifference, not unfaithfulness, to her husband.

"It is my wish, Clifford," his wife made answer, shyly raising her eyes to his face. "I want you to wonder which is I in the ball-room, and when we unmask perhaps we shall be side by side."

"Since it is your pleasure," he answered, "I will humor this strange whim."

The broker left his wife in a comparatively happy state of mind, and from that time preparations for the ball went merrily on. There were countless things to be remembered; and the advice of society leaders was sought and cheerfully given. The next day rumor of the event winged its way over the length and breadth of the city. Uppercrust circles were feverishly excited, and felt sure of an invitation; while those who could not boast a Mayflower ancestry, but possessed the golden key of wealth, hoped to be invited through methods best known to themselves. And so effectively did these sycophants ply their arts—in public, at the theatre, wherever the Reinhardts went—that their admission to swelldom was well nigh assured.

Madeline made good use of her time the next few days; so much so, in fact, that it was settled by

one accord that she could best assume some historical character — that of Cleopatra, for instance, or Mary, Queen of Scots. I say the selection of a costume was settled by one accord, since only three persons knew what it was to be — namely, Madeline, her maid, and the funny little costumer whose dingy shop was situated three flights up in a back street. To the costumer's judgment the women yielded, and his choice, after deliberate thought, was in favor of the Egyptian beauty, since that character would give him scope for the display of new ideas in his art, and perhaps add a feather to his cap for the discomfiture of a rival farther up town.

"A Goddess of Liberty," said the little man, while taking down the measurements, "wouldn't be so bad, either; but goddesses aint popular now, and of course yon don't wish anything *passé*. The Egyptian costume, on the other hand, is unique; and then it is something of a classic. Cleopatra, you know, used to float down the Nile — and — and — throw kisses to the crocodiles, I believe."

"Never mind what she used to do," said his customer much amused. "It pleases me to be Cleopatra, and you may make the costume at once."

So the matter of dress was satisfactorily arranged, and Madeline, for days thereafter, found herself involuntarily thinking how pleased Clifford would be when he saw her arrayed in the gorgeous robes of Cleopatra, for she fully intended to make herself known to him at the signal for unmasking.

CHAPTER VI.

“Whoe'er has traveled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an inn.”—SHENSTONE.



THE English detective, when he registered at the hotel, was particular to indicate an occupation. It is always best, detectives say, to have a visible means of support when traveling *incognito*; suspicion is not then so easily aroused, and if it is it can be readily allayed by telling a plausible story. Now, as a matter of fact, the Englishman's name was not Hartley; neither is it likely the profession of “commercial traveler,” affixed in a neat hand after the signature, truthfully explained his presence in America. The character of a traveling man however, was so cleverly assumed, that it speedily brought him several acquaintances during the early evening. With one of these Hartley was singularly impressed, and although he could not tell where he had seen it before, the gentleman's face had a strangely familiar look. Had he ever been in England? No, he had never made an ocean voyage,

this man assured him. Then, Hartley thought, it was useless to inquire if he were ever in Havana, since the general denial of any experience at sea covered that point as well.

"The gentleman who has just left us, Roderick Brawn," he remarked to his companion in a quiet game of billiards, "seems not to have traveled much out of his own country."

"So I gather from his answer to your question," replied the other, too intent on making a fine shot to wonder at the Englishman's remark. "But he has made others travel, if he hasn't himself."

"Ah, indeed? Still, I don't quite catch your meaning. Perhaps you wouldn't mind explaining, you know."

"Swords and pistols," said his friend significantly.

"A braggadocio sort of fellow, eh?" A slight raising of the eyebrows followed, as the detective grouped the ivories with a well-chalked cue. "Yet he seems a very proper sort."

"Not a mere braggadocio, either, for he is gentlemanly as a rule; and he has the reputation of always killing his man — that is, whenever one is foolhardy enough to accept a challenge."

"Then he is something of a duelist, it seems," continued the Englishman in the most careless, disinterested fashion. "I didn't know the code was at all popular in your country."

"Not here in the North — no," returned his friend, who was a well-informed young clubman of the day. "But Brawn, by the way, is a Southerner, and although he fills an eminently respectable posi-

tion here as a fencing-master, his passionate nature sometimes leads him astray."

"So the true line of safety consists in ignoring the challenge of this fire-eater," the Englishman laughingly made answer at the conclusion of the game. "Thanks for your information, for I have an appointment with him later on; and forewarned is fore-armed, you know."

Arm in arm, the two men left the billiard room, and following a custom well established, they pledged each other's prosperity before parting company. Neither, however, was a munificent patron of the bar, and the Englishman, it was noticed, drank very sparingly.

"Like Cassio," he explained, "I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking." His companion smiled at the very apt quotation, and turned to greet a new-comer, who, throwing off his dripping mantle, strode shiveringly up to the bar and demanded brandy.

"Hello, Juan!" was the cordial greeting of the Bostonian. "Back to America again, I see! But say, old fellow, what the devil ails you? Not sick I hope? You're dripping wet and look as pale as a ghost!"

"Only chilled, Luddington," said the Cuban, draining the liquor at a gulp. "I have been out in the rain too long; that is all."

"Hartley," the other was saying the next instant, "let me introduce my friend Fernandez. Juan, this is Mr. Hartley, of London. Glad to have you meet, you know. Fernandez and I were classmates at

Harvard, I may add, and this meeting is the first since he returned from Cuba."

"The very first, señor," replied the Cuban, with a feeble attempt to appear gay. He was, in spite of himself, disposed to be not a little nervous, and once or twice he passed a hand over his brow as if in pain. This did not escape the notice of Hartley and Luddington, who in turn advised him to go to bed and have a doctor called.

"I have an appointment at nine, gentlemen," he replied, "and it is very near that hour. I am not ill; only a little chilled by a long walk I have taken. Ugh! how the wind howls across the sea to-night. Ah, señor, you should visit my beautiful Cuba and see the difference!"

"Grand country out there, I've heard say," vouchsafed the Bostonian. "I have a friend here — Enrique, you know — who tells me the climate of the island is salubrious."

"And you, señor," the Cuban continued, addressing himself to the Englishman, "have never visited my country, either?"

"I hope to do so on my return to England, some time in the latter part of the summer; we may have the pleasure of traveling together."

"It may be a little earlier, señor. Say a month from this night, for it will consume that time in getting ready for sea." The brandy had made the Cuban careless of speech. "Then, señor, you will see a noble band leaving America for the conquest of Cuba. It is no secret here, for our friends are the Americans!"

"So they are, Fernandez," assented Luddington. "But your countrymen must remember Byron's lines :

Hereditary bondmen!
Know ye not who would be free themselves must strike the
blow?"

"A fine sentiment!" said Hartley quietly, "and uttered originally by an Englishman, I may add. And as for visiting Cuba, I am much inclined to go with you. At Havana, I suppose, one can see the bull-fight on a Sunday? It must be devilish exciting, you know!"

"The bull-fight *señor*," returned Juan, through whose veins the brandy had diffused a genial warmth that was gratifying after his trying experience in the rain. "Oh, yes, *señor*. In imagination I can see it now! There are the thousands of faces rising in tiers, like a scene in the amphitheatre at Rome. It is hushed and still: the multitude are waiting for the bull. Ah! and here he comes dashing into the ring — an ugly brute, with fiery eyes, and with tail erect. Hark, *señor*! the bugle sounds. And now the *picadors*, on horseback, madden him with their lances; next come the *banderilleros* — nimble fellows, who torment the bull with their darts. Now the animal is wild; he roars and paws the arena! But see! — the *matador*, with his sword and red cloak. He is attacked! — but no; the bull misses him, and his sword sinks deep to the hilt — and the bull is dead! 'Ha! but it was grand!' the people shout. '*Bravo taro!*' hear them cry."

"And this is a fair description of a bull-fight, is

it?" asked Luddington, when Juan had finished.
"It strikes me, Fernandez, the sport is revolting."

"That is because you are not a Latin," replied the Cuban with no show of anger toward his friend.
"It is different with you Saxons, who love to fight but not to kill."

The party then separated, the Cuban going leisurely to the door, where he bade Luddington good-night and waited for the appearance of the stranger he was to meet, while the detective hurriedly sought his room and attired himself for the street.

It was already on the stroke of nine when the Englishman came down-stairs again, but the Cuban had not yet left the hotel. He was standing moodily under the gaslight at the street entrance, his mantle thrown loosely over his shoulders in anticipation of the messenger's coming.

"This time," muttered the detective, "I shall take good care you do not elude me. You are going where I feel it is my duty to go as well, because I am employed by the Spanish government to watch your movements and those of your compatriots in America."

These thoughts were soon interrupted by the Cuban's movement toward a closed carriage that had stopped before the door, and out of which stepped a small-statured, nimble-footed fellow, evidently of the same nationality as himself, who gesticulated violently to the figure standing in the light.

"This way, señor!" was the quick, jerky language of the messenger. "I am a little late, and it is a long ride to our destination."

"In which direction?" asked Juan, speaking as one suspicious of the good intentions of his guide, whom he did not remember of ever seeing until to-night.

"To the south — and over dark roads," was the reply of the messenger, speaking, as before, in Spanish.

A figure with stooping shoulders, carrying a large umbrella to keep off the rain, passed along close to the carriage at this moment; so close, in fact, that every word of the conversation was readily overheard.

"Very good," was the inward thought of the latter personage. "To the south — and over dark roads," he repeated to himself as he trudged slowly along. "It's devilish lucky I picked up a smattering of Spanish while I was working that murder case in Madrid. If I hadn't, though, they wouldn't have sent me to America to shadow filibusters."

There was a hurried slamming of the carriage door, the driver whipped up his horses, and when the stooping figure suddenly stood erect and glanced back Fernandez was being borne rapidly away in the direction his companion had indicated as their destination.

The detective (for it was he who had so cleverly discovered the direction the carriage was to take) did not have to think twice before acting. A carriage was at that moment rumbling along toward the hotel, for he could hear it coming, and a faint gleam of light from one of its side lamps assured him it was in sight. Its driver, he soon decided, was a

typical hackman of the city, a man he felt he could depend on in the event of trouble, judging from his muscular frame and a certain fearlessness of manner noticeable as he pulled up his horses in response to the Englishman's signal.

"Kerridge, boss?" he asked respectfully. "Stay out all night, if you want to. Where d'ye want to go?"

"To the south," the Englishman made answer, "and over dark roads."

"Street and number, boss?" The mere indication of a compass point was indeed bewildering, and the detective was forced to laugh softly over his indefinite orders.

"See here, my friend," he continued in a tone calculated to inspire confidence, "I want you to drive in a southerly direction, till you overtake a carriage containing two people who've just left the hotel. I'll trust your shrewdness to do so, since they have not been gone five minutes; and when you get within easy distance, slow up your horses and shadow the parties. You shall be well paid for your trouble, but you must keep close-mouthed about whatever happens to-night."

It was a matter of ten minutes later than this time when the Englishman's carriage had approached near enough to the vehicle in which was the Cuban to make sure of the way. At first the only guide was the distant rumble of carriage wheels to the south, which kept about the same degree of distinctness for a while, and then, by a sudden spurt of the pursuer, it was easily seen that a closed carriage,

with lights twinkling on either side, just as described to the driver, was ahead of them on the main thoroughfare. But suddenly the carriage in sight whisked around the corner of a street leading still more to the south, and by the way the driver increased the speed of his horses, there was little doubt that he had discovered a pursuer.

“Have they given us the slip, my man?” asked the detective, when apprised by his driver of the state of things.

“It’s a good ‘un handling them ribbons, boss,” was the reply. “But there isn’t a night-hawk in the city as can run away from Dasher — that’s me, ye know. So keep a tight grip while I send the hosses along!”

Then followed a period devoted to horse talk, the dexterous use of a whip, and an intermingling of words not found in the vocabulary of the polite and refined. Mr. Dasher — he was rightly named — was warming up to the work in hand; and if the way the fire flew from the pavement argued a very high rate of speed, the confidence he reposed in himself was not wrongly placed.

“Good heavens!” ejaculated the detective, “this beats a London cabby’s speed, I do believe.” He was holding determinedly to the carriage straps and listening to the animals’ hoofs as they emitted a sharp, metallic sound on striking the pavement.

“I only hope the Cuban’s party won’t lose us in the beastly crooked streets,” he continued to himself. “It’s a pity, too, the night’s so dark. If we had but a faint light from the moon, it would be

easier to keep track of 'em. However, we're in for it — whew! but that was a sudden turn —" (Dasher was cutting corners in a surprising manner) "and there's no use in grumbling."

Dasher now had the Cuban's carriage again in sight, and though he no longer whipped his horses so unmercifully, they were kept up to their work by a sharp touch of the whip to their foam-flecked haunches.

"I say, cabby, you know," said the Englishman, thrusting his head out of the window, "there's another team behind us tearing along like mad. Mind it doesn't collide with us in this narrow street. Bless me! what a night!"

"I've got the right o' way," yelled the burly hackman, and let them as wants it fight for it! Signed, 'Jay Dasher, champion,' as they say in the sportin' column."

There was little use in arguing with the driver, and the detective contented himself with simply holding on inside the carriage. Whoever was following, he judged from the sound of the wheels, was driving a spirited pair of horses, and evidently meant to pass, at all hazards, the team owned by Jay Dasher. This was the height of foolishness, the Englishman thought, and if persisted in would inevitably end in a smash-up, if nothing worse in the nature of an accident happened.

The incidents that followed were brief and exciting. Along sped the horses, sometimes neck-and-neck, but sufficiently wide apart to avoid contact; and then the Englishman seeing the other driver was

bent on passing, ordered Dasher to keep close to his side of the street, the better to avoid a collision in the darkness.

“I hate to do it,” muttered that worthy, “and damn me if I would if the horses were a little fresher!”

The night being dark and rainy, the impromptu race was witnessed by but few passers, and these involuntarily turned as they trudged homeward, happy in the reflection that if anything of a serious nature happened they could read it under a double-header in the morning papers. It ended in a crash eventually, for through Dasher’s stubbornness in not readily yielding the right of way, and a woman’s persistent orders to the other driver, the two carriages locked wheels and the horses were brought to a standstill.

“I was afraid of something like this happening,” mused the Englishman as he alighted and very gallantly went to the assistance of the lady in the other carriage, which seemed to have sustained the only damage resulting from the collision. “We can’t possibly gain on the Cuban now, even if the hack is none the worse for this mishap.”

“Allow me to help you, madame,” he said in a gentlemanly voice, noticing the woman was trying to open the door from the inside. “Your coachman has all he can do to manage his horses, and one of the carriage wheels is useless, so far as continuing your journey to-night is concerned.

She then gave him her hand, and, gathering up her skirts from the muddy street, alighted to in-

spect the damage done the wheel. A sudden revelation flashed over the detective as he saw her features in the dim light. This was the woman who refused to know the Cuban only a few hours before! Where was she going on such a dark and stormy night, if not to keep an appointment important in its nature?

“Perhaps,” he thought, “she is going to meet Fernandez.”

“Yes, the wheel is useless,” she angrily remarked after a brief inspection. “And it’s all owing to the stupidity of your driver!” she continued, addressing the detective. “Why didn’t he get out of the way and allow us to pass?”

“You cannot possibly regret this accident more than I,” Hartley coolly returned. “But you must remember, nevertheless, that the night is very dark and the street uncommonly narrow. You will also pardon me, I hope, for reminding you that my man had the right of way, and that your coachman acted foolishly in trying to crowd him so.”

“But stopping to argue won’t make matters any better,” the woman retorted.

“Very true—at least, not much better,” the detective replied, while watching the play of passion on her pretty face.

“You talk like an Englishman, sir, though I cannot see your face very plainly.” He took good care she should not scan his features until he had time to study her awhile longer.

“I have no wish to deny my nationality,” he replied. “I am an Englishman. Percival Hartley,

commercial traveler, of London, and wholly at your service. And your name, you said, is — ”

“ Madame de Bouvillé,” she hesitatingly answered.

“ Then I am addressing a native of *La Belle France* ? ” he asked with a covert smile.

“ It is true I married, when young, the French gentleman whose name I bear, Henri de Bouvillé. But in my present distress, I cast myself upon the generosity of an English traveling man.”

“ Then permit me to hand you into my carriage, and while we are driving to your place of destination, which, very singularly, is near where my appointment calls me to-night, your coachman can have the wheel repaired and follow on. How does this arrangement suit you, Madame de Bouvillé ? ”

“ You are very kind ; and as to the arrangement, I can think of nothing better. It is a singular coincidence that we are both going to Cosmos Park to-night.”

By this time Reinhardt’s coachman — the reader has, of course, recognized the elegant equipage — had temporarily patched up the broken wheel, and with the assistance of a passer-by had driven slowly off in search of a carriage-smith, while the driver of the hack, under new orders, resumed his journey south with the addition of another passenger, in the person of the lady.

“ Very singular, madame,” replied the detective quickly. “ Yes, yes — sure enough. But really, do you know, I’ve lost my note-book ; yes, it doesn’t seem to be in any of my pockets. So I can only tell you the name of the gentleman I am to meet ;

but, since it involves confession on my part, I trust you will never repeat what I am going to say.

"Certainly not, Mr. Hartley; that were base ingratitude for the service you are rendering me."

"Well, then," continued Hartley slowly, "I have promised to meet a few congenial spirits to-night—men of the town, in fact—who go in for a quiet game, a little champagne, and that sort of thing, you know."

"Ah, I see," returned Madame Beatrice. "Something gotten up in your honor by a few of the traveling men you have met here, perhaps. And you will enjoy the night, Mr. Hartley, in the company of such people."

"No doubt of it; we travelers go in for a jolly time, you know, when not showing samples to some crusty old party. But so far as I know, there are to be no traveling men with me to-night. I am simply the guest of a very affable gentleman whose acquaintance I formed this evening at the hotel where I am stopping—at Parker's, you know."

"Then you are staying in town for a while?"

"Only for a short time, perhaps. I have got to wait for a new line of silks, and the samples will be sent to me direct from Paris or London, I hardly know which yet."

"I was simply wondering if your friend is any one I have met, since I have some few acquaintances in the city."

"Indeed—have you, now? His name, I am quite sure, is Brawn—Roderick Brawn, I think. It is possible you know him."

“I have some acquaintance with the gentleman, yes. You will find him a very companionable man ; but, for the service you have rendered me, I wish to warn you against one thing. Avoid a quarrel with Roderick Brawn, for he is very passionate and a skillful swordsman. In confidence, I will say that I am going to his house myself on important business.”

“This is the second warning of the kind I have had to-night,” replied the Englishman, “and you may be sure I shall not court death at the point of his sword. Thanks, my dear Madame de Bouillé, for your kindly interest in me. But have you no fears for your own safety to-night? And is there not some further service I can perform — act as your escort, for instance?”

The carriage had now stopped before a large block in a side street down which the hackman had turned. In the building itself, nor yet in the surroundings of the neighborhood, was there anything differing from the aspect of a dozen other localities in the city. It was, perhaps, a very near approach to the ideal neighborhood, in that the way one man lived, or why he lived at all, concerned his next door neighbor very little if any.

“I shall be obliged to leave you here,” Madame Beatrice replied, “for I am to enter at this first door, while your friend’s apartments are up another flight. Oh! no, Monsieur Hartley; there is no danger in my being here alone. The place is very respectable I assure you; and if I must confess it, I take pleasure sometimes in a game of chance myself. The excitement, I suppose, lends a fascination.”

“Excitement very naturally attends the game — yes,” said the detective, when he had conducted her to the door she wished to enter. “Well, I will leave you here, and hope we shall soon meet again, madame.”

But he saw her no more until the night was far advanced — and then, flushed with wine, his fair acquaintance was seated at the piano playing sparkling operatic airs, surrounded by a group of admirers who listened with rapt attention. Soon madame’s rich, cultivated soprano rose above the low voices of players in the room beyond, and she had, in figurative phrase, the world of *Cosmos* at her feet. The game was not progressing with its usual zest to-night ; it was not a profitable sitting for the bank, since the plays made were small ones, and nobody seemed to risk much money on the turning of a card. The Englishman had played lightly and won — which, Roderick Brawn shrewdly argued, insured his patronage of the tables in future. He had, moreover, become a favorite with the company ; and when he was asked to give them a song or story, the pseudo-drummer saw the policy of complying with their request. The detective was, however, in a quandary : he could not sing, and was in no humor for story-telling. In his dilemma a happy idea suggested a way out of difficulties. He was clever as a reader, and would recite a little poem, the subject of which, very opportunely, had a near affinity for the character of a soldier. So, with tender pathos and good dramatic action, he charmed his hearers by its rendition.

THE SENTINEL FLOWER.

The Sentinel Flower, O comrades of old,
 Is guarding your rest in its cuirass of gold!
 On fields where you fell in the heat of the fray,
 So proud to the last of our standards so gay;
 And the ring of the challenge is kindly and true,—
 “Halt! ’tis the grave of a soldier you view.”

Though strangers you are to the heralds of fame,
 The halos of glory encircle each name;
 E’en princes may envy the bliss of your dream,
 This lonely bivouac by the murmuring stream;
 And the feathery blossoms that wave o’er the tomb,
 Dispel by their splendor the shadows of gloom.

Aweary of conflict, and silent and lone,
 The soldier will dream of the years that have flown ;
 Of vows of devotion, and clasping of hands,
 And pressure of lips in the far-away lands!
 While the voices of dear ones, so tender and low,
 Are borne on the winds of the lost Long Ago.

Afar o’er the moorland, O comrades of yore,
 The bugles are sounding the battle once more!
 My spirit is saddened, for soon I shall lie
 Alone and unknown, ’neath the midsummer sky;
 But the Sentinel Flower my slumbers will woo,—
 “Halt! ’tis the grave of a soldier you view.”

* * * * *

The door was opened for Madame de Bouville by an elderly man whose quiet demeanor denoted the well-trained servant who knows his place and has no questions to ask without good cause. He stood respectfully aside until Beatrice had entered the hallway ; then the door was locked and bolted as before, and in the security of a cosily-lighted room madame divested herself of her outer garments, revealing the splendor of an elaborate evening toilet within the plate-glass mirror. There was the same lovely being, save a pale look upon her face, beauteous

without the aid of cosmetics and powders, that smiled at her from the mirror in her own room at the Reinhardts'. Her lovely neck and arms, revealed to admiring eyes, heightened the picture to a rare degree, as she meant it should; and in the golden splendor of her hair, arranged with exquisite taste, sparkled a jeweled arrow that scintillated like some new constellation in the skies of night. Madame Beatrice was indeed a beautiful woman—and, like that fabled youth Narcissus, she delighted to admire her reflected image in the clear depths of the waters of vanity.

"There is a gentleman waiting to see madame," the servant announced, after a timid knock upon the door. "He came with one of your Cuban friends."

"Yes; I am here with that expectation," she made answer. "But," she continued, "I can't see him with the color all gone out of my face. Bring me a little wine to refresh me, for I have had a terrible experience in getting here—came near being injured by an accident to the carriage. A small glass of sherry, or, better still, some of your old port—you understand?"

"Yes'm; old port, if you like. It'll bring the roses to your cheeks, madame." The servant, after serving the wine, started in the direction where the men were waiting, but she stopped him with a quick motion of her hand."

"Only one of them must now be admitted," she said imperiously. "What I have to say concerns us alone. Tell Arturo to take himself out of the way for a while; let him pass through to witness the

game, if he likes. Anywhere, so long as he can be found when wanted again. But the stranger who has not been to the rendezvous before, you may send to me."

The next instant the door was opened, and Juan Fernandez was ushered into the presence of the woman with whom, only a few hours before, he had parted in the broker's home — Madame de Bouvillé.

"The devil!" he said, loud enough to be heard by her, as the door was closed behind him and he found they were alone.

"You are very complimentary, Señor Juan," she gaily answered, rising from the languid pose into which she had thrown herself. "But I had an idea devils did not appear half so amiable as I am to-night."

"Forgive me, Beatrice," the Cuban said in softer tones, as he took her extended hands in his. "I am surprised — dumbfounded, as it were."

"Because you did not expect to find me waiting for you?" she asked him, with that charming innocence of manner she could assume.

"Yes — because I did not expect to see you, in the first place; and our last meeting, as you remember, was under singular circumstances. It was you, then, who sent the message and the carriage to the hotel?"

"There is no need that I should deny it, Juan. Yes; I was the author of that note sent by a friend of your country's cause."

To the Cuban's great astonishment, Madame de Bouvillé spoke of a revolutionist whose zeal and

patriotism he did not doubt ; whose knowledge of the workings of insurgent machinery, both on the island and among expatriated Cubans in America, was at once as complete and valuable as any possessed by his compatriots at home or abroad. Señor Alvarez del Marco was interested in the project then uppermost in the Cuban mind — a successful embarkation, from different points in America, of sufficient troops, hired and drilled by Spanish gold, to defeat the royal army then quartered inside the "Trocha," across which line, running from the north to the south of Cuba, the Imperialists had boasted that no rebel should ever draw his sword and live. Strongly garrisoned as was this line of demarkation, the brave-hearted Guajiros, inured to the privations of warfare by their sturdy life in the mountains, had fought their way into Western Cuba, where their friends lacked that thoroughness of organization essential to victory. But with the filibusters ready to pour into the coast cities of the west, and the mountaineers with their collected forces marching from the east, it seemed reasonable to predict for the Cubans a combined attack that would break the hated yoke of Spain.

"Then you have never met Señor del Marco?" asked Madame Beatrice.

"No ; I have not," he replied. "There has been much that I have had to do in the interior — at Matanzas — at other places, too, and I did not meet the señor. But I know of him, and I think you are a friend of Cuba."

"As to that, you can best judge by-and-by, when

those whom I have brought together here meet you under this roof to-night. And now, perhaps, you will not think me a *devil* — what say you, Juan?"

"I spoke unthinkingly, madame," the Cuban answered. "Ah! Beatrice," he continued, catching her cheeks between his soft palms and looking long and earnestly into her eyes, "I have not forgotten the old days at Havana, when you were so kind to me! It's not so long ago that Time has despoiled you of your beauty, Beatrice. You are even prettier to-night than when you smiled so kindly on me in the Plaza de Toros. I was as a stranger then in my own land; and my heart was sad, madame. Life seemed no longer fair; wealth, youth — all that a man could ask — had no charm for me that day. But your smile, Beatrice — ah! it made me think of her. She would greet me with such kindly looks, madame."

"She? — who is it you mean, Juan?" Half affectionately, as if she really pitied the young Cuban in his anguish, she drew near to his side again; and throwing one white, rounded arm about his neck, she laid her velvety cheek against his hot, flushed face. "Tell me who it is that has made your life so miserable, for perhaps I can help you."

"You, Beatrice?" he asked abstractedly. "Ah, no; it is impossible now. She is good and pure. But I forgot: you know her, Beatrice de Bouvillé!" The Cuban grew excited, and cast this pretty, clinging woman from him, as if she were some loathsome thing that had entwined itself around him.

"Hush! — in the name of mercy, Juan; don't

speak that way here. Be calmer, or you will work yourself into a frenzy. I fear you are not well, from your excited manner."

"I fear so, too," he answered dejectedly. "My blood seems boiling in a fever now; an hour ago I was chilled to the marrow. But I shall be better soon — and then I want you to tell me how you came to know Madelina, and how it is that you are staying at Señor Reinhardt's home."

"Very well, I will do so. But you must listen to me in a quiet way, or else I cannot tell you; the walls, perhaps, are not thick enough to drown your voice when excited."

Then, with her soft hand soothingly caressing the Cuban's feverish brow, Madame de Bouvillé told how, by a mere accident which she quickly utilized, it was her good fortune to become intimate with Clifford Reinhardt's mother; how, little by little, through her tact in meeting people of wealth and influence, it was easy for her to win the sympathy of those whose purses were open to the Cuban fund. She told him of the inner life led in the home of the Reinhardts; how Madeline, as if grieving over some wrong, was the most uncompanionable of wives; and how, day by day, she could see that between the broker and his wife there lay a gulf which — and before long — would widen so that each must go a different way. She pictured to the Cuban's mind, only with great exaggeration of detail, the misery endured by Madeline on her mother-in-law's account, till Juan could no longer contain himself.

"Ah, Madelina, Madelina!" he murmured, "I

feared it would be so. It was not because you loved him that they took you from me ; and now, in your gilded cage, imprisoned like a song bird, they will let you beat out your life in silence and alone."

Madame Beatrice was, so far, well satisfied with the success of her story-telling ; for she had awakened not only the Cuban's old love for the broker's wife, but had managed to so misrepresent some things as to call into being his strongest pity for the woman he loved. Thus she listened to his rhapsody of feeling, and trusted to her lucky star to shine out upon the dim uncertainty of her half-matured plot.

"Beatrice !" he cried, springing to his feet, "have you summoned me here to torture me like this ?"

"No ; I swear it ! Until we met so unexpectedly this evening, I knew nothing of what you have yourself revealed to me. It was to warn you against an Englishman sent by the Imperialists to discover our plans in America."

"An Englishman, you say ? Then it must be Señor Higgleton. It was he they tried to kill."

"And it is he who must be guarded against. If he is found — ah ! well, you know what will happen."

"Nothing of harm must come to my friend," the Cuban answered. "Remember, Beatrice, no stabs in the dark for him ! Besides, even if he is the one you mean, he has gone from here on the train."

"I am glad it is so, then ; but you need not shudder at the mention of daggers ! What was it that I so happily averted when I saw you standing by the man you hate ? And now you shrink at the very thought of — *murder* !"

“Beatrice!” said the young Cuban solemnly, “I swear by all the saints I did not go there to kill him! True, I was tempted, when I saw him alone—so happy, while I was miserable.”

They stood looking each other in the eye, but neither spoke for the moment. Madame de Bouvillé, half abashed by the Cuban’s piercing glance, was the first to speak.

“Juan Fernandez,” she began, “if ever you remember any act of kindness I have done you, listen to what I am going to say. Tell me, have you any suspicion why I so frantically threw myself between you and Monsieur Reinhardt to-night?”

“None whatever,” observed the Cuban with all the calmness of a Stoic, “unless it be that, like most women, your nerves were incapable of control in a moment of surprise.”

“’Twas because I love the man you would have killed.” Her voice was lowered to a whisper, but the terrible earnestness of her words rung in the Cuban’s ears like a pistol shot. He was dazed, surprised beyond expression; yet, bursting suddenly upon him, as if from the clouds, he was conscious of some new happiness—a thought of Madeline.

“Strange words from your lips, Beatrice—this confession of love,” he answered calmly. “Yet was it not because of you that the son of Don José fell, pierced by the sword of an Imperialist officer? Your love, they whispered in the café, would have saved him. And then the victor in the duel—what of him? You remember it well, madame. He could not live without you—and so deserted his

regiment to follow when you departed from Cuba ; but he was captured before he left the harbor, and like a soldier he was blown from the cannon's mouth on Moro Castle ! And now, Beatrice, you tell me you have learned what love's grand passion is ? Your love, madame, is the love that kills its victims in ways incomprehensible ! ”

“ Juan, you *must* listen to me ! ” she said excitedly. “ It may be that my love for him will give you the woman you mourn as lost. His wife — Madelina, as you call her — what if she should fly from him when his love for me is known ? You are here in America ; she will learn, sooner or later, that you are even in the same city ; and then, when the opportunity is right, what is to prevent you from leaving in company ? She has never forgotton you, perhaps. So much the better. ”

“ Madelina fly with me ! ” he said in a voice husky with emotion. “ And it is you, Beatrice, that Señor Reinhardt loves better than his own beautiful wife ? ”

“ And why should he not ? ” she asked with flashing eyes. “ Am I not beautiful, as well as she ? And as for my powers of fascination, have you known wherein I often failed to make men love me ? You, my friend Juan, are among the few whom I have not made my slaves ; but I know how you could be kind and yet scorn to take advantage of my gratitude — yes, I see it all. Your soul looked not on me, when we walked together in the faint starlight, but, soaring far out over the sea, it sought its happiness in memories of Madelina. ”

“Yes,” said the Cuban sadly, “it was ever so. I lived upon the past, though drawn into strange companionships for a time. Ah, well, Beatrice, life is indeed a vexing thing to those who love. But I am no longer a boy, and to the past must go all sentiments of my boyhood. I feel like a soldier now — brave when danger threatens most, and anxious for the battle that is to come !”

“You are a true Cuban ! But with the woman you love standing by your side when the ship sails away to your beloved Cuba — a proud, beauteous woman, who trusts her future in a soldier’s hands — will it not nerve your heart to greater deeds ?”

“I must not look upon the picture, Beatrice. To me the fascination of your words is fraught with danger, for at the mention of Madelina’s name my blood leaps within me, and I grow desperate in my thoughts ! But there is one request I would ask of you, madame.”

A knock at the door interrupted them, and Madame Beatrice, divining it was the signal that those expected had arrived, made haste to carry her point with Juan before they were admitted.

“And that request is — what ?” she whispered. “ Speak quickly, for our friends await us.”

“It is that you will arrange a meeting for me with Madelina — only a few brief moments, that I may speak with her alone. *I will make the attempt, for she belongs to me !*”

Again the old servant’s knock echoed from the panel of the door. Quick as a flash Madame Beatrice revolved in her mind the request and answered :

“It can be done, if you have the courage to enter the house again. Ah! the masquerade—nothing easier. It will occur not many nights from now. I will send you a card of admission and let you know what character she assumes; you will come disguised, but must not stay until the company unmasks. Then, my pair of turtle doves, you can meet in safety, thanks to my friendly assistance. Hush! they are coming.”

With this admonition upon her lips, Madame Beatrice turned from Juan to welcome the gentlemen who entered. They were, like himself, Cubans and filibusters, but men more advanced in years. One of them, the younger of the party, he had known during his student life, and to the others, whose movements at present do not concern us, he was introduced as one worthy the confidence and friendship of all patriots.

CHAPTER VII.

“ ‘Tis the high tide that heaves the stranded ship,
And every individual’s spirit waxes
In the great stream of multitudes.”

— COLERIDGE.



HE night set for the masquerade was ushered in by clear, starlit skies, with a balmy atmosphere redolent of spring, and from early evening until it had grown densely black overhead, as the clouds moved slowly across the bright faces of the stars, the gaily costumed guests arrived in couples at Reinhardt’s mansion on the hill.

“ What can be the matter with Juan ? ” Madame Beatrice wondered. “ Surely he will not refuse to come, now that I have laid the trap so nicely. Ah ! what if my plans should fail ? ”

There was a little flutter of curiosity as a new batch of arrivals alighted from their carriages. Beatrice, with secret joy, saw the Cuban among the others, and as soon as she could do so discreetly, she reached his side. He wore the rich, picturesque costume of *Fra Diavolo*, the bandit chief ; and his

grand carriage, his commanding presence, and the eager eyes that looked from behind his mask, seemed indeed to belong to some romantic age and people.

“Juan, Juan!” she whispered. “It is I—Beatrice. You were so late I feared that your courage failed you.”

“My courage? My conscience, you should say. But I am here, despite my delay in eluding Señor Brawn at the hotel. I think that man suspected that I was coming here — and to meet you, Beatrice. He is infatuated with —”

“Nonsense,” she answered, while conducting the Cuban to a secluded nook. “I know what you would say; that he is my lover, eh? Perhaps it might be so, were I not in pursuit of better game.”

“So I am led to believe,” the Cuban answered. “But what of Madelina? Have you learned what character she will take? Still, it does not matter, for I should know her among a thousand women.”

“Do not be too sure of that,” replied Madame de Bouvillé. “The costumer’s art is a very clever one. However, I know, through connivance with her maid, that she will appear at the ball as Cleopatra.”

“Cleopatra!” he repeated after her. “The most beautiful woman in Egyptian history.”

The two then separated: the woman to make some trifling alteration in her costume — that of a Polish Princess, which gave scope for the display of her coquettish nature: the Cuban to loiter among the guests till Cleopatra should appear, when he intended to offer himself as her cavalier in the march of the maskers.

The masked couples were forming for the march when Juan Fernandez, who had been the subject of much wonder, was observed to hurriedly approach a new-comer who had appeared in their midst in some mysterious way. It was Madeline, looking every inch the queen in her Egyptian robes, who had entered in a moment of confusion. The very luxuriance of her beauty seemed to make its impress felt among the guests.

“May the bandit chief hope for favor from Egypt’s lovely queen?” the Cuban asked her in a low, half-suppressed tone. He dreaded the ordeal of the meeting, and feared lest she should by some outcry reveal his presence in the house. “See — the march is forming, and you are unattended.”

She gave a surprised glance up to the eyes looking at her so earnestly, but did not speak. Had she recognized his voice, he wondered. Madeline seemed as if listening to a voice out of the past, and felt the fascination of that eager, soulful gaze.

“Since to-night we are equals,” she answered calmly, “a queen may consort with even a thief.” There were no wreathing smiles about the pretty mouth, with its white teeth gleaming through, to assure the Cuban that her language was only a bit of pleasantry.

“A thief only in the assumption,” Juan replied in the purest English he could command. “Surely, you did not use the word in any other sense?”

The lines about her mouth grew harder; her lips more firmly set. A struggle between two emotions was going on within Madeline’s soul. Madame de

Bouville, with clinched hands, was watching the beauteous Cleopatra, and knew what that struggle meant; on the one side loyalty to a husband's rights, and on the other a desire to yield to some wild, strange passion of a woman's heart.

"Juan Fernandez!" she sternly replied, "you have stolen into my husband's house without his knowledge; therefore are you a thief. Oh, why have you done this, knowing as you do how bitter is his feeling toward you? But I feared you would do something rash, for I knew you were in the city."

"Madelina, it is too late now!" the Cuban said, when it was safe to speak. "It may be the last time I shall ever look upon your face again — this night when thus we meet — you in anger, señora, and I in shame for intruding my hateful presence here."

"Not hateful to me, my old friend, Juan," she replied in pity. "You know I would gladly welcome you here, were it not that —"

"Yes; I know — but for him," he said dejectedly. "But listen, señora. I cannot leave the house now unperceived, and to do so openly means discovery. Let me be near you a little while; in the dance, among so many, surely no harm can come of our meeting!"

"Hush! we may be overheard," she admonished him. "There seems, indeed, no other way but to remain; but you must leave the house before the guests unmask. If you are discovered, think of the position you will leave me in before my husband. Even he does not know my costume to-night,"

“ ’Tis well, señora. Then, since they are moving toward the ball room, shall we not take our place in the march ? ”

“ Yes,” she answered, taking his arm. “ If we remain longer away from the dancers it will excite remark.”

The orchestra were playing a delightful march, and Madeline’s spirits rose higher every moment as she followed its winding movements, conscious that she was among the most elaborately costumed ladies at the ball, and not altogether unhappy in the turn of affairs incident to the presence of an old lover at her side.

“ Ah ! well, what does it matter ? ” she queried of herself when the first dance was over, and Juan, talking in tones too low for others’ hearing, was telling her of his life in Cuba, of his devotion to the cause that had brought him back to America, interspersed with recollections of the old days when they were such very good friends. “ It is only for to-night, and I may as well be happy. Clifford need not know every innocent pleasure I choose to take.” Then, at the memory of his seeming fondness for Madame de Bouvillé, expressed in little ways that argued nothing more, perhaps, than the appreciation of this bright, clever woman’s companionship, she found it quite easy to justify the course she was pursuing.

Others claimed her as the evening wore on, for Madeline was ever a desirable partner in the dance ; but when the musicians played the sweet, alluring strains of a waltz, Cleopatra and the bandit chief, as

if through some collusion, were among the first to lose themselves in its dreamy maze. They seemed to be oblivious at these times to whatever else was going on around them ; and even when Madame de Bouvillé, more by accident than design, was whirled by an awkward waltzer in such a way as to come forcibly in contact with the Cuban, he did not recognize her costume, nor act as if he were conscious of her presence.

He saw only the woman he was folding to his heart in that wild delirium of the waltz. No sound but her voice reached his ear above the sad, sobbing, wave-like melody that floated from the orchestral stand ; and when a sudden crash of the instruments, as if they were swept by some invisible spirit of the wind in a movement of anger, made her words inaudible to him, he still interpreted in love's unwritten language the motion of her lips, and felt each heart-throb with all a lover's ecstasy of feeling.

Such, too, it must be confessed, was the philosophical manner in which Mrs. Reinhardt viewed the situation. She breathed the air of a new freedom. It was so great a change from the routine of suspicion, guarded friendships, and endless questioning of her outgoings, that had made her married life unhappy. There was no one but Juan, she imagined, who knew her here ; so there could be no excuse for fault-finding in the morning, when the household awoke to take up its dull character again — leaving the mirth and music of the masquerade to be remembered as something seen in fairyland.

Beatrice meanwhile, had found an opportunity to engage the broker in a *tete-à-tete*, during which she adroitly turned the conversation in Madeline's direction, and as cleverly revealed her own identity in confidence to him. The fact that Reinhardt did not know which of the ladies was his wife made him depressed at the beginning of the ball, but he had so far kept his promise not to seek her out until the proper time. Still, his jealous disposition gave rise to an uncomfortable suspicion at times, and he regretted having pledged his word in the way he did.

"Then monsieur does not know his wife's costume?" she asked. "How strange, indeed! But perhaps you do not care to be informed, so I will not spoil monsieur's pleasure."

"Oh, as to that, madame, it really doesn't matter much. I enjoy knowing that she is here, and as for ourselves — why, the time is passing very pleasantly! But I suppose her's is among the less conspicuous costumes here to-night."

"Oh, monsieur?" Beatrice's voice and manner were such as to arouse Reinhardt from the easy, half playful manner he had learned to assume in her company. "Why, she is the belle — the sensation of the evening. Surely, you have seen her — danced with her perhaps!"

Then a couple who were beginning a new waltz swept past them as they sat talking. It was the Cuban and Madeline. This gave Madame de Bouillé the opportunity she had been waiting for, and she contrived to follow them with her eyes in a way Reinhardt could not fail to comprehend; yet

she kept silent, and coquettishly wielded her fan while awaiting his reply.

“ Madame,” he began in a husky, strange tone of voice, “ do you mean by looks to express what you do not, perhaps, care to say to me in speech ? ”

“ So, then — monsieur suspects ? ” There was a world of meaning in her words, few and simple as they were.

“ That the lady who has just passed us — Cleopatra, they call her — is my wife ? ” he interrupted, finishing the sentence Beatrice would have uttered. “ Yes, I know it must be so.”

She had expected him to betray his jealousy ; and now, wisely foreseeing it were better to let subsequent events develop of themselves, madame soon found a pretext for leaving his side.

“ Now remember, monsieur,” she whispered to Reinhardt, “ not a word of this to anyone. Only I thought it best to drop you a hint ; these masked affairs are not incapable of harm.”

“ Very true, madame,” he answered quietly. “ I comprehend. But I confess that I am surprised Madeline could so well deeeive me in her costume. If you have noticed any perturbation of manner, anything odd in me, you understand — I hope the reason is rightly understood.”

“ Certainly, monsieur,” replied Beatrice. But as she drifted away in the arms of the gentleman who had claimed her for the waltz, her thoughts took quite a different turn. “ He is alarmed,” she assured herself, “ and will likely say some unpleasant things in the morning.”

Being left to himself, Reinhardt could not justify the conduct of his wife in whatever light he viewed it ; and the more he pondered the matter in his mind, as he furtively watched the two dancers, the more settled became the conviction that she had imposed on him. Moreover, it was so obvious a piece of deception, that he felt there was no room for explanation, should he feel inclined to listen to her story. The secrecy she wished to maintain in regard to her costume he could now understand, and however plausible might be her version of the affair, here was one phase of it that could not be explained away. Who her companion was, and how he gained admittance to his house, were questions that troubled him and gave rise to new conjectures.

The reader already knows the sequel to Reinhardt's abrupt appearance before Fernandez and Madeline at the conclusion of the waltz, when so complete was their infatuation that they had become oblivious to their surroundings, and were beginning to draw the attention of others by waltzing together after the dance had ended. But in the confusion that followed Madame de Bouillé deserves mention not accorded her before, for it was due to her that the cry of "thief" was raised, which effectually drew the attention of the guests in a new direction, and the slight incident witnessed in the ball room was for that night at least superseded by a more startling, not to say romantic turn of affairs, in the midst of which the broker's mother had a timely attack of hysterics and thus heightened the general excitement.

The morning after the ball dawned bright and beautiful, but there were few of its participants who saw the sun's earliest beams shoot up from the sea, rising higher in their erratic flight, until, like a shower of silver-tipped arrows, they darted hither and thither over the quaint old city. Society's votaries care little for the splendor of the sunrise after a night of social dissipation, when tired eyelids seek respite from the glare and glitter of the ball room, and languid bodies demand long periods of repose to fit them for the pleasures that come again with nightfall.

This being true of the fashionable world in general, it will explain how Madame de Bouvillé, after a refreshing sleep that lasted until her mantel clock chimed the hour of nine, awoke with all her usual buoyancy of spirit. She pushed up her window and drew in a tiny silver basin, which had been left out through the night to catch the falling dew, preparatory to the making of a charming toilet; for madame had a superstition that a dew bath, being nature's own cosmetic, was the very best conservator of a woman's complexion, if only the subtle moisture could be caught in a vessel of silver. The fresh, in-rushing air of this spring morning, faintly suggestive of bursting buds in the garden below, was in itself so invigorating and agreeable, that madame chose to risk catching cold by remaining in the draught quite *déshabillé*. Tempted by a desire to appear at breakfast in the gayest of spirits, she began to execute a series of gymnastics, going through graceful exercises that set the blood

bounding in her veins, until the delicate skin was aglow with the roseate flush of health. This was followed by that delightful feeling of warmth and geniality which comes with perfect circulation, and as madame turned to her mirror she smiled in a satisfied way at the image reflected therein. Pope's fair Belinda, at her toilet amid

“Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, *billet-doux*,” was not a whit more lovely than Madame de Bouillé as she appeared before her glass this bright May morning. And when she had donned a pale blue wrapper, relieved at the throat by filmy lace, the effect of her elaborate preparation was strikingly apparent as she sallied down to breakfast.

Only the broker's mother was in the dining-room when Beatrice entered. A tired, troubled look, which told of a restless night after the masquerade, was discernible on her face. But on perceiving Madame de Bouillé, bright and rosy as the morning itself, she welcomed her with outstretched arms and a motherly kiss.

“I am glad you have come, Beatrice,” she said, “for I am weak and low spirited this morning. Clifford will be in presently and we will have breakfast; he is looking miserably, and I fear he is the worse for that lamentable affair last night.”

“The affair of last night,” repeated Beatrice abstractedly. “Oh! yes, I know. You mean the robber who was discovered?”

“Yes; the thief who had the audacity to throw my guests into consternation. Oh! dear, dear, it completely ended the ball, for the ladies were too

frightened to dance afterward. It is an outrage on society to let such people go at large!"

"So it is, madame. And Monsieur Reinhardt, perhaps, was too generous to the little hunchback. He was only a boy, it is true; but may he not have been a confederate of the other?"

"Yes; I believe now he was, Beatrice. But he is gone, and we shall probably never get another clue to the mystery. However, nobody's diamonds seem to have been stolen; and were it not for the talk it will make, I should think no more about it."

"Oh, well, let people talk, madame. It cannot be more than a nine-days' wonder at the most. Of course it will get into the papers, be read and commented on—and then, in a day or two, it will be forgotten. Ah! here is the paper, madame. Let me see if there is anything about the ball."

Madame de Bouillé opened the newspaper and eagerly scanned its columns, her eye glancing rapidly over each item, lest mention of the masquerade should escape her notice.

"The paper has only a meagre report of the matter, as you have heard me read it," said Beatrice; "so you see it isn't anything you need worry over."

Then Clifford came in to breakfast, receiving with apparent indifference his wife's message, that she was indisposed this morning and would not be down, and Beatrice did not continue the subject.

"Madame de Bouillé," he said in a low voice, after her cordial greeting was over, "I heard you speaking with my mother about last night's occurrence. May I ask as a favor, madame, that you will not let

her know the truth ? Be my friend in this, and there is nothing in reason I would not do to repay your kindness. She is old, and not very strong ; the shock of knowing that my wife has acted so indiscreetly might throw her into a passion, and I fear for the result."

"I will promise monsieur not to reveal his secret," she replied. "And as for the rest, remember that Beatrice de Bouvillé asks no greater happiness than to be your friend."

"I thank you for your friendship, Beatrice," the broker answered tenderly. He was beginning to feel the force of her presence, as from day to day he discovered some new charm of voice or manner ; and this morning she looked so pretty, was so animated, and yet so full of pity for him, that he sighed to think of her ever leaving his mother's companionship to share the dangers of the filibusters on a foreign shore.

The breakfast over, Reinhardt left the house without seeing his wife ; and dining late with his club, he did not meet her the rest of the day. It was so the following day, for the memory of that scene in the conservatory goaded him to misery, till he could not trust himself in a meeting with Madeline.

He thought of methods by which he might quietly gain a separation from his wife, if the gravity of her offense warranted such a step ; but feeling the need of legal advice, and being on terms of intimacy with a prominent divorce lawyer, he went to him for counsel. The result of this visit was far from satisfactory. It made it imperative that he should first

call on his father-in-law and arrange matters with him ; then, if he really meant to institute proceedings, the custody of their child, and the amount to be settled on his wife as alimony, with numerous *et ceteras*, could be talked over and agreed upon.

The first stipulation laid down by his legal friend warned him against hasty action in the direction of the courts. He lacked the courage to meet his father-in-law under such circumstances as these and tell him why he had come. Beside, he no longer had Maitland in his debt, and could not bring him to terms in the event of a quarrel. Fortune had suddenly smiled on the worldly prospects of the old merchant ; for one day news came from South America, and men called Gregory Maitland rich, while ambitious young clerks with a few hundreds to invest besieged him with questions about the guano fields. The tide had turned at last, and when Maitland looked the world square in the face again, not even his son-in-law's claims remained uncanceled.

“ Then, suppose you sleep over your purpose another night,” said Reinhardt's lawyer, when he objected to the advice laid down. “ I do not want to plunge you into the misery of a divorce ! Give the matter further thought ; ask yourself, if need be, where the trouble lies ; think of your child, man ! have you no love for — ”

But Reinhardt, aroused to the enormity of the step he was about to take, would hear no more.

“ Stop ! stop ! ” he cried out in anguish. “ You will drive me mad ! Let me think ; give me a little time, and I will see you again.”

He rushed blindly into the street, and mingling with the throng, sought to forget that a shadow had suddenly darkened all his life.

It was a strange happening of fate that the Cuban and his friend Luddington should pass Clifford Reinhardt shortly after his hurried departure from the lawyer's office. The two were sauntering leisurely along, and the Bostonian, whose attention was pre-occupied at the moment, saw nothing of the quick, surprised glances exchanged between his companion and the broker. The effect of the meeting on Reinhardt was instantaneous and striking. His worst fears were now confirmed, and controlling a desire to return and confront the Cuban, he continued on his way in a towering passion.

During the interval between the accidental meeting with Madame de Bouvillé and the incident above spoken of the English detective had made good use of his time. The advantages gained by being introduced among the frequenters of Cosmos Park had been followed up to the extent that he had made himself familiar with the plans of the Cuban patriots, and incidentally, from what he had been able to learn of the Reinhardts and their friendliness toward Madame Beatrice, he suspected something of her designs in that direction.

On closer acquaintance, the detective found the adventuress a most interesting woman; one who, in addition to beauty, possessed the charm of being a good talker on a variety of subjects, and who could effectually sustain the character of a French gentle-woman. Her history, so far as she had ever touched

upon it, was ordinary enough. The daughter of a Parisian wine merchant, orphaned in her girlhood, she had sought the *opera-bouffe* to begin a career before the foot-lights. Then followed her marriage with Henri de Bouvillé ; the gay, happy life she led in France ; her husband's death as a soldier in Cuba. All this, with the exception of the *opera-bouffe*, was the same story she had told before ; but the Englishman was qualified to judge of its truth or falsity. He, unhappily for her peace of mind, if she did but know it, had been told at Havana that, among those who in America were actively helping the insurgents, he would find this same keen-witted, fascinating woman, who had now come to regard him somewhat in the light of a friend — the result, no doubt, of the slight favor he had done her one stormy night — while his easy, affable manner, in the assumed character of a traveling man, served to inspire confidence and make his society agreeable. It was the discovery that she was then in the same city with Juan Fernandez, at the time when the detective was about to take the metropolitan express in search of her, that had excited his suspicion at the train and led to a change of previously conceived plans.

Thus does it happen that on the day the Cuban and Reinhardt had met so unexpectedly, the detective had an appointment to keep with Madame de Bouvillé at Cosmos Park. The hour had been set at four o'clock, and on consulting his bull's-eye after dinner, he had found he had fully an hour to reach the place of meeting. So he set out to leisurely walk in the direction of the Park, never thinking

but that his memory of the streets he had passed through in a carriage on other occasions would be a sufficient guide. He felt quite sure of his way until he had turned several corners leading into ways that wore a not familiar look. The detective laughed quietly at the idea of his getting lost in daylight, and concluded he had better keep on in the direction he was going; but presently, through a narrow street he came suddenly upon, he caught a glimpse of the high, tapering masts of the shipping, and knew that he had been gradually drawing near the water front, until he was entirely out of his way and on the verge of the harbor.

He whistled softly to himself and stood looking in either direction in hope of seeing a carriage approaching him. The long, dusty street was deserted save by the draymen's teams he saw in the distance. But yonder, leaning idly over the wharf, was a boy apparently doing nothing but gaze upon the water. He would bribe him with a few pennies to forsake his study of the tide, and become for a time the guide of a traveler who had wandered from his course.

The detective gave vent to a sharp whistle, which aroused the lad from his reverie; then he called to him, and signaled that he wished to speak with him. But instead of darting toward him, he noticed that the lad's first impulse was to run away, and it was evident from his actions that he wavered in doubt.

"Don't be frightened, my lad," he called out to him. "I only want you to show me the way."

Then, as the boy advanced toward him, the detec-

tive saw for the first time that he had stumbled upon the little hunchback who had tried to relieve him of his purse, and he readily understood, from Dandy's unwillingness to meet him, that the lad had been quick in his recognition.

"So, it's you, is it?" Hartley continued in a reassuring manner. "Well, I'm glad to see you again, and I hope you haven't forgotten why I paid you that money the night you wanted to pick my pocket."

Dandy hesitated a little, as if trying to shape his thoughts into speech, fidgeting meanwhile with the sleeves of his coat, which, being a trifle too long for him, were rolled back to give his arms better play. He looked about to make sure he was not being watched by Tom Barlow, or any of the family, and then bounding around the corner out of range of the junk shop, he waited for the detective to follow.

"If they catches me talkin' to a strange cove like you," Dandy began, "they'll lick me till I tell 'em what's in the wind."

"Do they beat you very often?" the detective asked, with a desire to learn something of the lad's history.

"Well, more'n I want to be licked," was the answer. "Tom's pretty good to me, though—when he's home; but the old man's ugly, now he's drinkin' again. And the other night I ran away from him; so if you keep me talkin' here too long, and he happens to want me, there'll be trouble when I get back."

After this pathetic statement of the case, he could

find no excuse for detaining the boy longer than was really necessary, and on Dandy's informing him that he knew the way to Cosmos Park, the two set out on their journey thither. The detective, however, continued his adroit questioning as they walked along, and was not a little amused at the manner of Dandy, who felt something of his own importance in the eyes of the stranger, and even had the temerity to allude to some people's habit of wearing their whiskers in their pockets. A shrill, childish laugh escaped the hunchback's lips at the memory of the scene he had witnessed at the depot, and Hartley good-humoredly joined in his glee, while praising him for having kept the secret so well.

The afternoon was mild and warm, and becoming heated by their brisk walk, they slackened their pace, and took a breathing spell. Being somewhat more than comfortably warm, the detective carelessly threw his coat open to the wind; and a few moments later, happening to glance down at the little figure trudging beside him, he smiled to see that the child had imitated his action, and unbuttoned his old Prince Albert coat (a late addition to his wardrobe, obtained from a friendly pawnbroker) with the air of a merchant prince, while the sportive wind whisked the coat-tails around Dandy's legs in a way that impeded free locomotion.

"Your coat doesn't fit very well," the detective observed. "By the way, who's your tailor?" he dryly remarked.

Undisturbed by the question, yet aware that his new friend was making sport of him, Dandy twirled

his fingers in the arm-holes of his vest, and striking a comical attitude, he looked up into the detective's face with a mischievous twinkle lurking in his big blue eyes.

"I buys my clo'es ready-made, boss!"

Too much amused to think of replying, the detective stood studying the spectacle before him. At first he saw only a small, grotesque body, with a jauntily-posed head on its shoulders. Then his eye took in the whole situation — the half-defiant pose of the hunchback, his complete mastery of the situation, and, lastly, what caused the usually cool-headed detective to involuntarily start in a surprised manner, a ring that Dandy had slipped on his finger after getting out of sight of the junk dealer's shop. The discovery of the ring, which Hartley instantly recognized as identical with that worn by the Spaniard who had killed his brother on the Storm King, was strangely interesting to him. He remembered the baleful glitter of the serpent's jeweled eyes, that morning in the fog, when the hand on which the ring was worn held a murderous knife in its grasp.

"Boy, where did you get that ring?" he asked excitedly, seizing Dandy's hand and making a closer inspection.

"I took it off'n a man's finger what we found in the water, and it's mine for keeps, boss."

"You mean that you got the ring from the finger of a dead man you found in the harbor?"

"That's what I told you, didn't I?" Dandy, being untrammelled by any finical ideas of syntax,

did not understand that the other had only reconstructed his sentence in order to make its meaning more apparent to himself. "Only I didn't say the man was dead," he added.

"Ain't dead?" repeated Hartley in amazement. "Where is he now, then, and how did you get his ring?"

"I took it before he come to life again," was the hunchback's puzzling reply. "And they've got him locked up in a room now, waitin' till it gets safe to let him go."

Then, in a few words, as they continued on their way, the detective learned all the hunchback knew about the Spaniard, and having convinced little Dandy that he would be a friend to him, after promising to say nothing about the Barlows to anyone, he obtained the boy's consent that he should keep the ring until he could meet him the next day on the Common.

Having an interest in the movements of the Englishman, we enter with him, at Cosmos Park, the apartment occupied by Roderick Brawn in his double character of a fencing master and the keeper of a semi-fashionable club house. The establishment is one easy of access to those who give a satisfactory answer to the attendant at the door, and so Hartley, being known to the servants, finds no difficulty in being admitted; especially since he is to meet no less a favorite than Madame de Bouillé.

But madame cannot see him for half an hour yet, he is told. She has just arrived, and has important business with the master in private. So he is asked

to make himself comfortable in an adjoining parlor. A bottle of Bass' is brought him, and he is left to his own reflections and a late number of London Punch, which, being a reminder of home, he becomes for a time absorbed in.

The detective was not so deeply interested in his paper but that he could hear the voices of Brawn and Madame de Bouvillé in high debate. A quarrel was evidently brewing, and he changed his seat to a position nearer the door, ostensibly to get a better light for his reading, but in reality to overhear their conversation. — Usually, he had noticed, Brawn appeared very devoted to madame, while she accorded him a close intimacy without allowing his attentions to intrude upon her at all times, and he rightly construed their falling out to mean something serious in its nature. He was soon enabled to judge what the trouble was by hearing Brawn exclaim : —

“ By heaven ! Beatrice, you are in my power, and if you do not marry me you know what to expect.”

“ Fie ! Roderick Brawn,” he could hear madame saying. “ Is this your boasted chivalry, that you would coerce a woman with threats ? ”

“ Have I not the right to claim your love ? ” he continued. “ You have been the flame, and I the moth that hovered round it. And now, since you defy me, I’ll play my trump card and — ”

“ And ruin yourself as well as me,” she interrupted. “ If you close your house to my Cuban friends, or betray us to the police, cannot you see you will be the loser ? Who will leave as much

money at your tables as these same filibusters, in whom the love of play is next to patriotism? You are a fool to think —”

“Ah! my pretty tigress, you look well in a rage; but I have a greater surprise in store. What if, through a careless word of mine, these Cubans suspect you are a *traitor* to their cause?”

Madame de Bouillé, white with rage not unmixed with fear, strove to make a reply, but for the moment she could not utter a syllable. At this sign of weakness, Brawn smiled with a sense of the power he held over the woman he adored.

“You lie!” burst from Beatrice’s lips, when she had gained sufficient composure to speak.

“Very good; but I have the proofs.” As he spoke, the duelist drew from his pocket a document which he slowly unfolded. “This letter, found where you dropped it the last time you were here, is damaging evidence against you.”

Madame de Bouillé sprang toward him, and would have torn the parchment into fragments had he not been too quick for her. He caught her firmly about the waist with one arm, while with the other he held the letter out of reach. Then seating her again, he drew forth the proof of her complicity with Señor del Marco a second time.

“No; you will listen while I read it to you. You didn’t know I had made use of my spare moments in learning Spanish, perhaps; but such is the fact, for I foresaw it was well worth the effort. Now listen to my translation, for you see I have a copy of the letter in English.

On the other side of the door the detective listened with strained ear for what was to follow. It seemed a long time before he heard Brawn's voice again, so great was his eagerness to hear the rest of the conversation ; but at last, in clear, distinct tones, so that no sentence was lost, he heard the gambler reading Beatrice's letter.

“HAVANA, CUBA, 1869.

“Our plans are now in danger of being discovered, since, through the jealousy of those who have acted with me, I am no longer supreme in the revolutionary party here. Can they suspect? I fear they mistrust that all is not right in America. The Government remains inactive as yet, and though Don Sebastian has heard rumors of your movements, he little dreams that he may wake some morning to find his troops beaten by the rebels. He has sent an English detective to learn your plans ; and should he escape the men I have set upon his track, and reach America to spy upon you, *he must be got out of the way!* You will know him as an elderly Englishman. He sails on the *Storm King* — the same vessel that will carry this letter to you. On the steamer with him will be two of my trusted Spanish agents ; one of whom, Gonzalo Carrasco, is the bearer of important papers to you, and whom you will know from the fact that he wears my signet ring as a passport to your confidence. After that you must hasten the departure of the filibusters for Cuba ; delay can only lessen our chances of getting the reward offered by the proclamation at Madrid. It is whispered here in Havana, that, to him who first gives warning of the Cuban uprising, and the sailing of the expedition from America, the government will tender the office of Governor-General. That, then, shall be for me ; while you, madame, shall keep the money to queen it where you please. Remain faithful to our compact — act discreetly — and keep me informed of every move you make.

“ALVAREZ DEL MARCO.”

Though couched in language meant to convey no adequate idea of what the previously arranged plans of these two persons were, the letter that Brawn had

gained possession of, and which he had laboriously translated into the less musical Saxon tongue, clearly indicated that Madame de Bouvillé had entered into a conspiracy with Señor del Marco, whose lust for office far outweighed his loyalty to the Cuban cause, by which she bound herself to betray the filibusters and thus reap a harvest from the royal coffer.

“ Egad ! but I never dreamed of this ! ” muttered the detective. “ Not content with feathering her nest on this side the water, she is scheming to betray the filibusters for Spanish gold ; and this very night, if my information is correct, she will urge upon the patriots the advisability of embarking their little army — a horde of half-drilled mercenaries, and a few hot-headed, glory-blinded Cubans — at the earliest date possible to fix upon. A clever piece of deviltry, I must confess ; but it shall not be the means of sacrificing these filibusters after all. Poor fellows ! they little think a baptism of fire awaits them on the shores of Cuba ; for, apprised of their coming, the Spanish fleet would environ their vessels and literally butcher them in sight of the land they have sworn to free.”

The discovery of the letter left Madame Beatrice no choice but to acknowledge that Brawn was in a position to work her ruin, if she remained at cross purposes with him. He was smiling at the completeness of his victory over her, and emboldened by his success, he drew her to him affectionately and without a murmur.

“ You see, Beatrice,” he continued, “ that fate has given me the upper-hand. I see very clearly the

game you and this Alvarez del Marco are playing ; but unless you promise to marry me, and share the reward you hope to receive, I swear by the gods that I will drive you forth hunted like a fugitive slave."

"Would you add the cruelty of a slave-drive to your other crimes, Roderick Brawn ?" she asked. "For there are deeds you have done that merit the name of crimes."

"There is nothing I would stop at, Beatrice, to make you mine. Since first I saw you I have loved you blindly—madly, I may say ; and in return, you have laughed at what you call my presumption in wishing to marry you. It was not so until Fernandez came back to America. Since he is come, you find his society more agreeable than mine. It is he whom you are closeted with while the real leaders in this wild scheme for liberty, and the very men you profess to serve, are forced to await your pleasure. He was secretly admitted to the masquerade given by your friends on Beacon Hill ; denial is useless, for I followed and saw him enter. He was here the next night, and you would see no one but him ; the following day I saw you together at lunch in a quiet, out-of-the-way place near his hotel. And so it has been ever since ; no time to see anybody but Juan — unless it is the Englishman, and he, I am convinced, is not a fish for your net, since he is too cunning to be caught."

"No ; but through me he has been very profitable to you, no doubt. He always plays at the tables, I notice ; and why need it concern you if I

have an engagement with him now, so long as it serves to bring him here?"

"I find no fault with you because of that," he answered. "It is against your intimacy with the Cuban that I protest. And as for my winnings from the drummer, you are either much mistaken, or else you wilfully imagine I am fleecing him of his money; while the truth of the matter is, he is one of the luckiest men, and knows the cards as the scholar does his books. But once more for all, Beatrice, I ask you to marry me when you have carried out your plans with this traitor, Alvarez del Marco. Take time for your answer, and remember what depends upon it."

After a period of some hesitation, in which Brawn never took his eyes from her face, Madame de Bouillé, like a woman who sees a ray of hope in the only course left her, advanced to his side and asked:

"Would you marry a woman who has not learned to love you?"

"Yes; and teach her afterward."

"Then, Roderick Brawn, since you have me in your power, I will purchase your silence."

"And marry me like a sensible woman?" he added.

"Yes; but on this condition: that you will not interfere with my plans, nor seek to lessen my influence over Juan Fernandez until the day I become your wife."

"Well, I will not be unreasonable," assented Brawn, "as long as you do not play me false." And then to himself, with a malicious smile, he added, "If I do not seek a quarrel with this lover

of yours, and teach him what it means to cross swords with me, I deserve to be the fool you take me for, my pretty Beatrice."

When Madame de Bouvillé was at liberty to see the gentleman she had expected, the servant informed her that he had called, but was unable to wait any longer. Then she made haste to depart, and an hour later was keeping an appointment with a fashionable *modiste*, where she regained her wonted composure, while the pretty little dress-maker went into raptures over madame's graceful draperies.—

"There was no other way," Beatrice mused on her homeward journey, "but to promise to marry him. He holds that letter as a menace to all my hopes. But since he thinks it is Juan whom I love, I will find a way to rid me of his company if my plans work well. Oh, no, Roderick Brawn, you have not triumphed yet, though fate has indeed placed me in your power!"

From Cosmos Park, after he had learned such unexpected news, the Englishman took his way to the nearest telegraph station and sent a cablegram to Don Sebastian at Havana. It was in the nature of a cypher dispatch, and to the operator it seemed a meaningless jargon of Spanish words. But as the detective watched the man at the key, he spelled out the message in the mysterious alphabet of telegraphy, and, interpreting the cypher as it would be understood at Moro Castle, fancied he heard the busy little instrument in front of the operator telling the story to its mate far over the sea:—

"Expect news of the filibusters' sailing at any day. They cannot leave America without my knowledge. Meanwhile arrest one Alvarez del Marco; he is a traitor to their cause, and is plotting to gain wealth and position from the Spanish Government."

Then, with a final click, the instrument suddenly became dumb; and he knew his message was speeding southward, flashing over the wires with lightning haste, to begin at Key West its long journey to the palm island.

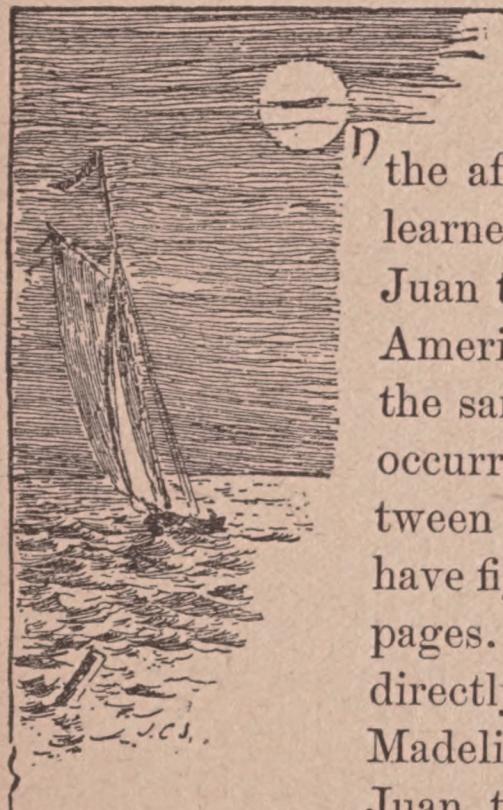
"That will serve as the prelude to what will come later," he mused while on the way to his hotel. "It will also tell Don Sebastian that I have lost no time in getting at the bottom of this business. He will arrest the traitor, and thus the news that their plot is discovered must soon reach the Cuban leaders here. It is the best I can do for them, and if they persist in leaving America after this warning, they will do so only to meet the Spaniards in unequal battle. My next move shall be to interview the murderer Gonzalo Carrasco; with him in my power, to bring Madame Beatrice to terms, I can safely enter upon the task of breaking the evil influence she seems to exercise here."

The detective next day met the hunchback as agreed upon, and afterward confronted the Barlows and their prisoner, to what purpose, and with what success, will be seen in the progress of events to come.

CHAPTER VIII.

“O angel night, thy dewy wing
Enfolds the spirit’s dream,
And to the fevered heart you bring
A balm from Kedron’s stream.”

— DRIFTING SONGS.



In the afternoon Clifford Reinhardt learned that his wife’s old lover, Juan the Cuban, had returned to America, and was even then in the same city with himself, there occurred a stormy interview between two of the people who have figured prominently in these pages. The broker had gone directly home to openly charge Madeline with having admitted Juan to the masquerade in defiance of what she knew to be his express desire. But whatever else his jealousy prompted him to charge her with, or however base were his hastily formed opinions, and however reasonable it seemed to him that he should think as he did, the purity of her motives could not by any subtlety of reasoning be successfully impeached; nor was there anything in her conduct at the ball to sustain the unjust sus-

picious entertained toward her. But the storm so long brewing had reached a culminating point, and its lowering clouds were soon to burst upon these victims of a common folly.

The broker's first move on reaching home was to seek his wife, for the purpose of acquainting her with what he had discovered, and learning from her own lips if it was the Cuban whom she had shielded at the masquerade. He was in a frame of mind bordering on frenzy, for it must be remembered that Reinhardt was a proud, sensitive man, and shrank from the thought of dragging an honored name into the divorce court; while on the other hand, should his suspicions prove to be founded in fact, a stern sense of justice demanded some such course as this.

Three days had now passed since Madeline and Clifford had spoken to one another, and they were days of misery and suspense to both. He, as we know, had spent much of his time away from home, and after the manner of men had sought to forget his trouble amid the clinking of glasses, where congregated the merry fellows of his club; while she, womanlike, indulged in headaches and occasional fits of crying, relieved by sudden bursts of temper that served to sustain her courage and nerve her for the meeting that was to come.

In these hours of isolation and heartache Madeline found new happiness in her baby's smiles, and nurse Margaret, with a world of wisdom in her quiet gray eyes, would bring little Clifford, and lay him in his mother's arms, then withdraw on some

slight pretext, while Madeline cooed to her baby, and covered the tiny mouth with kisses.

"I can trust your friendship, Margaret," said her mistress suddenly this morning, when the nurse had brought her in a dainty breakfast. "You are always kind to me, and more like a mother."

"It's because I love you, ma'am—and besides, if you will let me say it, because you don't seem to be very happy. You see I can't help knowing how things are between you and Mr. Reinhardt. Now, these two days you haven't stirred out of your room; and he hasn't been near to ask how you were, but goes off early in the morning, and stays till late at night."

"Very true, nurse; he is angry with me about something that happened at the ball. It will all come right by-and-by, when he asks me to explain my conduct. But I am so weary of this way of living. The suspense is dreadful, and sometimes I wonder how it all will end. Margaret, do you believe in dreams? I mean, do you think they ever come true?"

"Why, yes; sometimes they do. I know I have had many a dream, ma'am, that was a true one."

"And were you always happy afterward?" Madeline's manner was almost childlike in its simplicity as she asked this question. "I wish you would humor me, nurse, for I am going to tell you my dream."

"Ah, they were not always happy dreams—the ones that came true," Margaret answered sadly. "But God knows best. He sends us dreams, I

sometimes think, to teach us to be good, and kind, and patient."

"You talk so sober, I'm afraid you'll laugh at what I'm going to tell you."

"No indeed, ma'am. I was only thinking of my little one that died. Now let me hold baby, while you finish your tea and toast, and I'll listen to your dream."

"Well, last night I dreamed that I had Dapple saddled, and rode over to see sister Edith, leaving baby here with you — just as you are sitting now — with him dancing in your arms. Wasn't it queer that I should see you both so plainly? But the best of the dream is to come. I thought my husband was waiting for me when I came back, and I went to him just as I was, and asked him to forgive me. And Clifford just —"

"Just took you in his arms and kissed you," chuckled her listener, giving the baby a toss in the air.

"How did *you* know, nurse?"

"Oh, I have had fallings out with my man," said honest Margaret, dropping a tear to her husband's memory, "and that's how we always made up."

"Well, that's just what Clifford did," replied Madeline, with a happy light in her eyes. "But, after all," she said with a sigh, "it was only a dream, Margaret."

"Yes, I know — but it will come true, if you do just as you dreamed of doing. Now, if you feel able to ride Dapple, take a breath of air this afternoon; it'll do you good this beautiful spring day.

But be sure and go through everything just as you did in your dream ; then it'll come out right, I *know* it will."

" Well, your advice is very sensible," she replied, " and I will let Thomas saddle my horse after dinner. A ride of a mile or two will put me in better spirits, if nothing else comes of it. And, now I think of it, Edith is sixteen to-day, and with Harry away at college it will be a lonesome birthday."

Madeline was a graceful horsewoman, and one thoroughly at home in the saddle, and this afternoon in May, as she rode down the hill, and set off on a canter along the river road, many an eye followed Dapple and his beautiful mistress. The temptation to ride out to Longwood was very great, since the weather was delightful, and the sense of womanly freedom Madeline experienced made her light-hearted, and well-nigh oblivious of all trouble ; but she thought of sister Edith spending the afternoon alone, or perhaps in the dull company of Aunt Maitland, and suddenly checking her horse with a firm rein, she turned and galloped off toward the dear old home where the happiest years of her life were spent. A mischievous light was in her dark eyes, and she was more like the Madeline of old than she had been for many a day. Edith would not expect to see her at this time ; and so, as a pleasant surprise, she meant to dismount Dapple in the lane, sweep in upon the little household, and capture her aunt and sister by strategy.

So admirably was this plan carried out, that she gained the house unperceived ; and being quietly

admitted by a servant, without arousing the attention of others, Madeline gathered up her trailing habit, and noiselessly approached in the direction of her sister's voice. She heard Edith singing an old ballad she had taught her long ago — one she herself had sung so many, many times, because it was somebody's favorite — to the accompaniment of her guitar. The playing of this instrument Edith had also acquired from Madeline during their hours together ; and though her proficiency was in no degree brilliant, it gave her a certain prestige as a musician among her friends, while the pleasure derived from the accomplishment was its own reward.

But as Madeline listened at the door the music ceased, or rather it seemed to die away in low, tremulous tones. Then a master-hand swept the still quivering strings of the guitar, and she was startled at the gay Spanish air suddenly invoked by the player, for it had such a familiar sound, and seemed to be drawing her back to the past and its memories. With strange interest in the scene, she looked in upon the group in the room. Aunt Maitland, her busy hands plying the needles incessantly, was knitting by the window, and near the young girl, whose attention was taken up in watching the player's fingers, sat Juan the Cuban, looking intently at pretty Edith while he played.

“ Your song has made me think of the old airs,” said the Cuban, at length. “ And now, little sister, I will sing for you.” He had always called her his little sister during his student days.

He sang to them of starry heights, and beauty's isles where songful streams were flowing, to the low, half-plaintive music of his guitar, and in rhythmical cadence told the story of a refugee who, lamenting the loss of some ideal, found a solace in strains supernal that recalled the past, till the singer's voice trembled with emotion. The entrance of Madeline, at a moment when the attention was fixed upon Juan, was not perceived by either of the others, and she drew back into the shadow to listen to the song.

EURYLEE.

O'er the desert sands of duty,
Eurylee,

Hope allures to isles of beauty,
Eurylee!

Where her starry heights are glowing,
And the streams of song are flowing,
There is bliss beyond our knowing,
Eurylee!

And from realms of love eternal,
Eurylee,

Sweet, seraphic strains supernal,
Eurylee!

O'er the wearied spirit breaking,
Bear a balm to soothe its aching,
Thoughts of hours with thee awaking,
Eurylee!

Thou art lost to me forever,
Eurylee,

For the seas of fate dissever,
Eurylee!

But thy memory, o'er me stealing,
Harps upon the strings of feeling,
Joy's elusive isles revealing,
Eurylee!

“Oh, Madge! you darling!” was Edith’s cry of recognition, for she had discovered Madeline and was leading her toward the Cuban. “I am so glad you’ve come. This is our old friend Juan, and he has been singing to us; just as he used to when you and —”

“I have had the pleasure of hearing Señor Fernandez sing,” Mrs. Reinhardt interrupted, seeing at once that her sister was approaching dangerous ground.

“Thanks, señora,” the Cuban gravely replied. “It has been a long time since you heard me sing, has it not, señora?”

“Yes; a very long time, indeed. I had no thought of meeting you, when I started to surprise auntie and Edith; so you see the pleasure is quite unexpected

“And had you known I was here,” the Cuban asked when, after an hour spent together, he was slowly conducting Mrs. Reinhardt to her horse in the lane, “would you have come to me, Madelina?”

“No, Juan,” she replied. “Our paths must lead in different ways. There is no need to tell you why, since my husband’s dislike is such that open friendship between us is impossible. Could you know the sorrow caused by my thoughtless conduct at the ball — the isolation and silence I have borne — the cloud of suspicion resting over me, your manhood would forbid that you ever again compromise a woman’s honor.”

“Let me atone with life itself, señora! I would make you happy — a queen among women — in a

land of tropical beauty. Madelina, could not love — ”

“ Speak not of love — 'tis profanation ! ” she interrupted, with a superb gesture that silenced him. “ You forget there is a gulf between us that is impassable.”

The Cuban’s chivalrous nature was deeply touched, for until then he had not realized the enormity of his offence, so blinded had he been by Madame de Bouvillé’s reports since the night of the masquerade, telling him of Madeline’s indifference to her husband, and picturing to his love-crazed brain the possibilities of an elopement with the broker’s wife. He saw in such a step the consummation of all his dreams of happiness. The woman he loved would thus break the fetters that bound her to another ; a divorce would follow their departure for Cuba ; and when the war was over, the battles fought and freedom gained, there would be no legal impediment to their marriage. But now, unsustained by his evil genius, and in the presence of the woman whose ruin Madame Beatrice had so basely plotted, he felt unequal to the part he was expected to play.

“ I am indeed a villain,” he answered. “ But love, that does not think of consequences, is my only plea for pardon. For days together, after reaching the city, I had watched for you to leave the house. In the hurrying crowd, at the theater, whither fancy led me, I searched for your face in vain. I even stole into your home one stormy night, heedless of what might happen, that I might hear your voice again ! Then came the masquerade

— a desperate chance to reach your side ; but since it was my only hope, I chose the character of Fra Diavolo — and the rest you know."

"And I, in my weakness, forgot the duty a wife owes her husband. I allowed you to stay, when I should have exposed you to him ! But now we will not part in anger." The Cuban had assisted her into the saddle, and stood stroking Dapple's flowing mane. "Only promise to forget me, Juan, or think of me as if I were dead !"

Tears were in her eyes as she reached out her gloved hand in token of farewell. The Cuban raised it to his lips in silence, for his thoughts were far away. He heard the deep roll of musketry, the clashing of sabers, a bugle's victorious peal high above the din of battle ; and in that momentary trance the soul of a hero looked forth from his eyes, for he was a soldier, pure-hearted and brave, who led his countrymen on to victory ! The soft allurements of love, the light of beauty's glance, no longer held him in thrall ; but a new strength, a nobler impulse for the future, made him a better and a braver man.

"It is well, señora ; it is well. You have shown me my duty, and I obey ; the destiny of a Cuban must henceforth be mine. This night I shall leave America — perhaps forever ; for some must die, and I may be among the first to fill a patriot's grave. If, when memory recalls the past, you bestow a thought upon Juan, think of him as one who loved you with a love as pure as ever man has known. And should you need my friendship, Madelina, to shield you

against Señor Reinhardt's suspicions, I beg that you will not deny me one last request. On this card you will find my address in Havana; take it, Madelina, and do not forget."

"I accept your friendship," she answered, taking the card. "And now I must return."

"Farewell, Madelina, since it must be so," the Cuban said, as she gently withdrew her hand. Then he watched her out of sight, and after a brief parting with Edith and Aunt Maitland, he followed on in thoughtful silence.

* * * * *

It was the hour of sunset and a time for reverie, when Madeline rode back to Beacon Hill, after her parting with Fernandez. Her thoughts, instead of taking a backward turn, ran on before, and anticipated the meeting with her husband; and if she were asked how glowed the colors in the western sky, or whether the evening gave promise of a fair to-morrow, in all truth she might have said the outer world was lost to view, and that the sagacity of Dapple, rather than her own guidance of that pretty animal, had brought her safely home.

"So you had a nice time," said nurse Margaret, while smoothing out the folds of the riding habit. "And I hope you've done everything you saw in the dream?"

"Yes; very nearly," her mistress replied. "I found Edith and auntie at home, and I enjoyed the ride on Dapple. But do you know if Mr. Reinhardt has come yet?"

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. He came not long

ago, and after learning where you had gone, he said I needn't trouble myself to give you any message, because he was going over to your father's."

"Perhaps he went a different way. I wonder what he could want with me in such haste. Did he seem like himself, Margaret; or was his manner like that of a man who is very angry?"

"He did appear to be angry, ma'am — a little bit excited by something, I should say. But lor', ma'am, that's just how my man would act when we had fallings out! So don't worry yourself about what he wanted, for it'll come right in time. You must be almost famished after galloping in the wind, though; so if you'll mind baby a minute, I'll run down and order something for you."

"I cannot eat — at least not now, Margaret; but if you will, you may get me a cup of tea, and make it good and strong."

In a few minutes the nurse returned, bringing the information that the broker had just come, and from all appearances he was not in a sweet-tempered mood, for he had kicked a beggar off the steps and called the servants a parcel of idle louts. "But lor', ma'am," she added in a confidential tone, "my man was always the maddest just before he'd give in." Even this bit of practical wisdom, however, did not dispel the misgivings Madeline felt in consequence of her husband's strange conduct, and she instinctively nerved herself for what she believed would be a stormy meeting.

Meanwhile, though unknown to her, the broker had received a visitor in his study in the person of

his father-in-law, Gregory Maitland. The merchant, on reaching home, was informed that Reinhardt had been there only a short while before, and in an excited manner demanded to know where his wife was. And being told she had started homeward, he turned without a word and left the house. All this was cause for alarm in Aunt Maitland's mind, and, in order to stop the torrent of questions put by her brother as to what had occurred during the afternoon, she told the circumstance of the Cuban's call on Edith, and remarked that it was singularly unfortunate that Madeline should have met him there. Then Maitland, who divined something of what the trouble might be, started post-haste to investigate the matter in an interview with his son-in-law.

"Go on with your story," said the merchant sternly. "I can only hope that you are laboring under some hallucination."

"Would to God it were so!" the broker continued. "Is it hallucination to see your wife happy in the arms of another, while her husband's existence, and the sacred ties of motherhood, are sacrificed to the pleasure of a former lover? No, no, Maitland! This is no wild fancy of the brain; it is truth—stern, unalterable truth! If, in some hallucination, a man can be dealt a blow that stuns him and leaves its mark, then call it by what name you will!"

Reinhardt, becoming somewhat composed, then detailed the story of the masquerade, and the confirmation of suspicions through a chance meeting with the Cuban, supplemented by the discovery that his wife had that afternoon met Fernandez.

The entrance of Mrs. Reinhardt served to break the embarrassing silence that fell upon the two men. She started back in surprise at sight of her father, and something in his manner—a mixture of anger and humiliation—seemed to repel her first impulse to reach his side. On her husband's face she saw only the workings of a passionate nature; no sign of welcome, no manifestation of pleasure that she had come. Like some hunted creature suddenly brought to bay by its pursuers, she stood before them in proud defiance, looking more beautiful than ever in her flowing robe of cardinal, with hands tightly clinched, and her great dark eyes lit with soulful eloquence.

“Unhappy child!” cried her father, “if you have hearkened to the charge made against you, answer me if it be true or no. Was it Juan Fernandez whom you let remain in your husband's house to poison all his happiness?”

“Am I brought to judgment,” she demanded. “And are you my inquisitors?”

“Yes—and the God who now looks down upon you!” the broker thundered in reply. “If you are guilty may He forgive you, for I cannot!”

“Do not add to the burden of her sorrow,” said Maitland with quivering lip, for Madeline had impulsively thrown herself at her husband's feet and was pleading for condonement of her offense. The terrible significance of his speech, uttered with the earnestness of a man who has weighed the precise value of every word, had terrorized her heart, and she was affrighted at the violence of his temper.

“The burden is of her own making, and she shall bear it!” he angrily retorted. “Look at your imperious daughter now — humbled to the dust by her own folly! What more abject confession of guilt were possible?”

“Oh, husband! Clifford, have pity and hear me speak,” implored his wife. “It was such a little sin — and the penalty is so hard, so cruel! If you will but listen to me I can explain it all, for I swear —”

“Add not perjury to your soul’s false seeming!” the broker interrupted. “My eyes have been the witness of a wife’s disloyalty, and your own lips have condemned you!”

“For the sake of our child — your own little Clifford,” cried Madeline, in her despair, “I entreat —”

“Entreaty is in vain,” he answered, “and I will hear no more. My heart has turned against you, and cries out for a vindication of its wrongs. If there is justice in the law, it shall be mine!”

With these heartless words upon his lips Clifford Reinhardt strode from the room, leaving Madeline weeping in her father’s arms. Every plea had failed; the die was cast; her dream, alas, had not come true!

“Do you think, father,” she asked between her sobs, “he will carry out his terrible threat?”

“I fear so, my child,” said the old merchant, in a broken voice. “And the thought that I, your father, who hoped to make you so happy, am to blame for this, overwhelms me with a sense of my own wickedness. Ah! but I thought you would learn to love him when you knew your own heart.”

“Father, you could not know,” was her reply. “And yet, strange as you may think my words, *I have learned to love him, when it is too late!* You heard him say that he has turned against me; that he will make me sign away all right to bear his name. What then remains for me, but to give him back blow for blow? *He shall know that I have loved him*, and in that knowledge, I hope and pray, he will find as keen a misery as I now suffer. He shall learn that love and hate are alternate passions in a woman’s soul!”

“Be sensible, Madeline, and hope for the best. He is beside himself with passion now; so do not seek to encounter him again until the morrow. In the morning I will reason with him, for then he shall be made to realize that, with all your faults, he is doing you a great wrong.”

Then Madeline sought and found an asylum for her grief on nurse Margaret’s motherly bosom, and to her she poured out the story of her sorrow, receiving in return a generous sympathy and love.

“I cannot stay here any longer,” she said to Margaret. “The very walls seem to whisper that terrible word, ‘Divorce!’ and they will drive me to it. If I go they cannot force me to sign away my rights, nor give up my baby to another’s keeping; and oh, nurse, if I should never come back here any more—if any thing should happen—always be the friend to me that you have been, and teach my boy to love the memory of his unhappy mother! Promise me that you will, Margaret.”

And Margaret, overcome by the situation, burst

into tears and was ready to promise anything; but like the sensible woman that she was, the nurse saw how ill-advised such a course would be, and after expostulating with her young mistress till bed-time came, she retired for the night convinced that wise counsel had for once prevailed.

But the state of Mrs. Reinhardt's mind was such that no argument of the case, however plainly put, could shake the determination to leave her husband before he found an opportunity to carry out his threat. The more she pondered over the consequences of such a step, the deeper became her infatuation with the idea. And at last, as the old tower-clock at the foot of the hill was striking the hour, she started up from her reverie and made hasty preparations for flight.

Having stolen in and kissed little Clifford once again, Madeline left the house unperceived and turned her face resolutely from the scene of so much unhappiness. Out under the silent stars, alone in a great city, the temptation to return played upon her fears at times; but she kept on in an aimless way, and having some vague, dimly-defined notion that the east-bound train would leave for Portland before midnight, she finally decided to take refuge in the old seaport city she had not visited since she was a child. The funds she had were sufficient for any emergency of the present, and when these gave out the sale of her jewels, which she had the presence of mind to include among the few articles carried in her reticule, would suffice to supply her with money for a time. Beyond this contingency she had no thought

of the future, but left all to the blind happening of chance, for what could she know of the actualities of life?

Upon her table at home, where Margaret's eye would fall upon it in the morning, she had left a hastily-penned letter to her husband, and this the broker read with a groan of anguish, for its few brief sentences—disconnected in their meaning and blotted with tears—told of the writer's irresponsible state of mind at the time it was written.

"That does not sound like a woman who is guilty of the charge you make," Reinhardt's lawyer said when he had read Madeline's letter. "It has an undercurrent of goodness in it that much inclines me in your wife's favor. Now, isn't it barely possible—yet unintentional, of course—that you are doing her a great wrong? The history of these cases teaches me that in a moment of anger strange accusations, unwarrantable in fact, jeopardize the happiness of a family."

"It may be that I have acted too hastily in this matter," replied his client. "Things look different this morning, and—I confess it with shame—I would not listen to her when she came to me last night. But tell me what is to be done? I must know more than this, even if the knowledge kills me!"

"The first step," said the lawyer, quite matter of fact, "is to trace her from your house last night. That is properly the business of a detective, and with your permission I will have an officer detailed for the case—only it may be necessary to give him

access to your wife's apartments in searching for a clew."

"I interpose no objections, remember, to anything you think best. Send your man at once, and I will be there to meet him."

The hours sped on, and it was late in the day when the Hon. Tomson Wilford, the great divorce lawyer, looking up from the preparation of an elaborate argument, met the gaze of a stranger who had quietly entered his private office. He arose in a fit of petty anger at the entrance of this dignified personage, who had the ruddy color of a sleek, well-fed dominie in his face, with clerical garb and grayish-brown whiskers, and the spirit of good-nature lurking in his affable smile. But even the lawyer's respect for the cloth did not restrain him from a hearty rebuke of his visitor's violation of an inflexible rule.

"Confound it, sir!" he began, "you take an unwarrantable liberty in this intrusion. You should have sent in your card by the boy."

"It is no fault of the lad, I assure you," was the pacific reply. "He insisted on taking my card."

"Then why the devil"—the blunt, outspoken lawyer began. "I mean, why the deuce—oh, damn it, I'm only making a bad matter worse! I beg your pardon, sir; but your abrupt entrance establishes a precedent that does not please me."

"So I perceive by your manner," replied his visitor, in rare good-humor. "What you wish to know is, perhaps, why the devil I didn't give the lad my card, when he asked for it."

"Your intuition does you credit," returned the lawyer. "That is precisely as I would have expressed myself."

"My excuse is, that I yielded to a whim in wishing to present it in person," continued the visitor. "And, if you will allow me, my card, sir." He then handed to the amazed Mr. Wilford a card on which was written in a round, legible hand, "Bishop of Campobello."

"Ah,—um,—yes," stammered the lawyer. "I had no idea I was addressing a bishop, though of course I surmised you belonged to the church; but a bishop—really, your Grace, I owe you a thousand apologies."

"Tut, tut," said his visitor, with a wave of the hand, "one will suffice, my dear sir. To be sure my reception was not over cordial—but perhaps I overstepped the bounds of hospitality; and in return for your *amende honorable*, since it will help us to an understanding of this visit, I will say that the character of a bishop suits me equally as well as the last I assumed—which, by the way, was that of a drummer!"

"Your language, while it amuses me, is slightly enigmatical," the lawyer replied, with a puzzled air.

"May I ask if you were expecting any one from the detective bureau?" was the bland inquiry.

A hearty laugh was the lawyer's only answer for a minute, while the stranger seemed to catch the infection, for he chuckled softly to himself at the success of his make-up, which had been so true to life that he was able to deceive this keenest of advo-

cates, who now went into a paroxysm of laughter as the detective's strategy dawned upon him.

"Admirable! — admirable, indeed," the lawyer assured him when he had regained his wonted composure. "But now to business," he continued, having examined the credentials handed him by the detective. "And since you are to be a bishop, I am curious to know where lies the bishopric of Campobello."

"That, also, is a chimera, so far as I have any knowledge of Campobello. It may be in the Pacific Ocean for all I know to the contrary. The truth is, I am an Englishman, and have not been long enough in America to get used to the geography of the country. I saw the name in print, and for the short time I shall need the title, the Bishop of Campobello will suit me as well as any other. You, of course, will know me as Wyckliff Ried, of the London agency; but until the mystery shrouding Mrs. Reinhardt is cleared up, and her guilt or innocence made manifest, I shall assume the bishop's tenure of office with that end in view."

"I confess I like your cleverness — but how is it possible for you, a stranger, to do this thing successfully?"

"That you shall see. I am not such a stranger in your city as you may think. Important events are transpiring here with which I am familiar, and which, I may add, explain my being in America at this time. You will be surprised to learn that one who figures prominently in the matters I have unearthed is an inmate of your client's house; yet

such is the fact, as I know it to be. I chanced to be in consultation with the chief of police when your message arrived, and seeing at once my opportunity, at my own request he has assigned the case to me. Now, the only help I ask is to be established for a few days as the guest of Clifford Reinhardt; that you can bring about in an interview with him. But none of the broker's family must learn of my true character, for, unless my judgment greatly errs, it is with foes within we have to deal."

"You astonish me," said the lawyer, when the detective had finished. "But I will assist you to my best ability; and if you remain here until my client can be summoned I will arrange matters with him."

This being easily accomplished, Wyckliff Ried, whom we have known under another alias, was that evening presented on Beacon Hill as his Grace the Bishop of Campobello, and the reverend guest, in the most unobtrusive way, began his surveillance of Madame de Bouvillé and the household in general.

* * * * *

The departure of Mrs. Reinhardt not having been discovered until the next morning, her whereabouts at this time, in spite of the search instituted by the police, remained a mystery to all. No human eye had watched this unhappy woman in her flight from home, and so there was no definite clue to guide her pursuers; but had they known the precise direction she had taken, and even followed her subsequent movements until they became lost in the throng that jostled her in their rude haste at the railway station,

from that point onward the clue must have grown less certain and eventually been lost altogether.

Here she stood with senses bewildered, for the train had gone and it would be hours before another would come thundering over the rails. By that time, she feared her father would learn of her flight and spare no means to bring her back; and then the thought of what the future held in store should she return — that cold, formal meeting in which she would be made to impassively surrender up her child, and thus avoid the publicity of divorce proceedings in the courts — impelled her to go out into the night again a wanderer and a fugitive.

“Madelina! is it you, away from home so late and alone?” The human sympathy of the voice thrilled her as she turned to find the Cuban at her side. He had alighted from his carriage, having recognized her as she stood in uncertainty beneath the gaslight, and approached to learn the reason of her being there at that hour of the night.

“Yes, Juan, it is I,” she answered wearily. “But, God pity me, I have no home now.”

“No home, no home,” he repeated after her in a bewildered way. “Tell me what has happened, Madelina. Has he — your husband — has Señor Reinhardt dared —”

“I know what you would say,” Madeline interrupted, as the Cuban hesitated in his speech. “Yes, he has dared to think me false, and for that I hate him!”

“And for that you are leaving him, Madelina!” An eager light gleamed in the Cuban’s eyes as he

waited for her answer. He saw within his grasp, by these strange workings of destiny, the woman he had mourned as lost to him forever.

“Yes; I could not stay to be driven forth like some accursed thing! They are leagued against me; and should I go back now, they would gloat over my misery.”

“Then do not return!” cried Fernandez. “Madelina,” he continued, drawing nearer and speaking in impassioned tones, “I have never ceased to love you, though fate wed you to another. It was hard to give you to him; but what had I, Juan the student, to offer in place of his riches? Nothing but the wild, hot passion of a Cuban’s heart. But now you are free!—for has he not driven you to this?—while I am rich, señora, and will lavish love and fortune to make you happy.”

“Do not mock me in my misery!” she cried. Her pale, sad face, set off by masses of beautiful hair, seemed to him fair as an angel’s as her eyes looked up to his appealingly. “Happiness is not for me, Juan.”

“This night when turns the tide,” he continued, “a steamer will bear me back to Cuba—back to the dark-eyed señoritas of my native land. But I shall think of one across the sea—of you, Madelina—and at the memory of this time my heart will call me coward! But no! I will be brave and take you with me. Madelina, come—it is our destiny!”

“Oh, Juan, Juan!” she moaned. “And is it you who dare say this to me? You whom I thought so noble, so honorable in your manhood!”

“Did he think of honor,” the Cuban answered passionately, “when he gave to another the love which should be yours? Is it honor to keep this Madame Beatrice under his own roof; to grant her every wish — no matter what it be — to place his carriage at her pleasure, and teach his servants to bow to her authority? Ah, I thought she lied when she told me it was she your husband loved; but I did her injustice in my unbelief!”

“She — Madame de Bouvillé — told you this?” Madeline interrupted. “Swear to me that you speak the truth!”

The Cuban raised his hand, as if to call the saints to witness, and turned his eyes heavenward. He felt the full import of the oath he was about to take; it meant much, very much, to him.

“By the memory of the mother who died in giving me birth, I swear my words are true! From madame’s own lips, and not from others, have I learned this secret.”

“It is enough!” she answered. “Take me with you, Juan Fernandez — away from these false shores. No matter where, so that I never look upon his face again!”

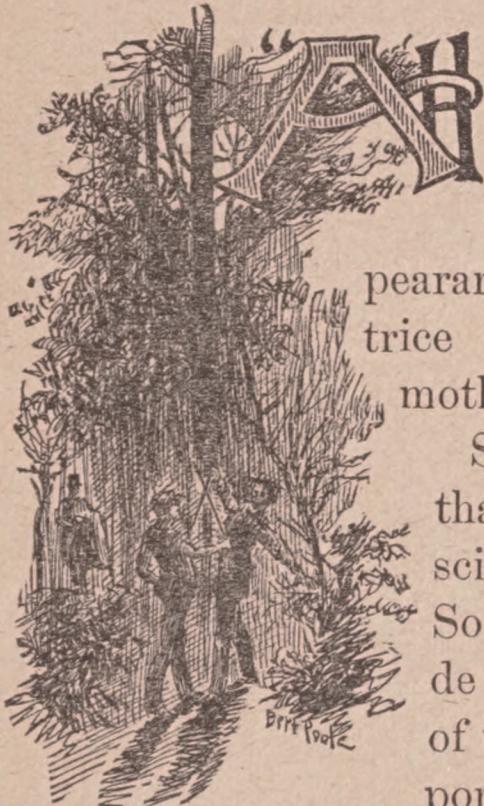
“At last, fate has given you to me!” the Cuban murmurs, as they stand together upon the Storm King’s deck. Before them lies the sea across which they are going; landward, the city of the Pilgrims, mantled by night’s soft-falling shades. Tall shapes of masts, and shadowy hulks, lay round about them; the steamer rises and falls with each flow of the tide, and tugs at the straining hawsers

that hold it at its moorings. Their thoughts seem treading the narrow pathway of the stars, and they grow silent and even sad. The tide's mystic whisperings become a monotone to their ears; for like the voice of a friend, as the water rises from point to point, it utters a solemn warning of disaster. So the end draws near. Light answers light from beacons along the sea: the great ship seems instinct with life and motion: a little while, at midnight, and these meteors of science will flash a guiding intelligence toward the Antilles.

CHAPTER IX.

“I was not born to shrink from idle threats,
The cause of which I know not. At the hour
Of council, be it soon or late, I shall not
Be among the absent.”

— MARINO FALIERO.



MADAME, permit me to compliment you on your fine appearance,” said his Grace as Beatrice entered with the broker’s mother.

Some philosopher has told us that a woman enjoys the consciousness of being well dressed. So the statement that Madame de Bouillé was fully conscious of this fact, and seemed correspondingly happy in the knowledge, will be received as a bit of information thoroughly orthodox in character. Still, it did not need fine feathers to make fine birds in madame’s case ; her grand figure would lend a lissome grace to the plainest garb a woman ever donned.

The broker and his nominal guest, the Bishop of Campobello, were standing at a window in low conversation when Madame de Bouillé entered.

“And you think that she has not left the city ?” the former was saying, though madame’s ear failed to understand the question.

“I am not quite sure of that,” was the reply. “It is certain, however, your wife didn’t leave on any of the night trains, since not a train left in either direction without the knowledge of my associates.”

“Yet you say no clue has been discovered?” replied Reinhardt impatiently. “Nothing to indicate the direction she went after leaving this house two nights ago?”

Then turning to Madame de Bouvillé, whose entrance at this time had cut short their conversation, the detective greeted her with the neat compliment which opens the chapter.

“Monsieur le Bishop is quick to notice,” madame gaily answered. “But come, gentlemen,” she continued, taking her place at the table, “the dinner is getting cold while we are waiting.”

“I have no appetite,” said the broker, “but I will join you at table.” Then aside to Beatrice: “How does my mother bear up under the trouble, madame? She still refuses to think well of my poor wife, I suppose.”

“Yes, Monsieur Clifford; she will not listen to anything in her favor”—as if Beatrice, arch schemer against the absent Madeline, had uttered a syllable in favor of the young wife—“but insists that she has forfeited every claim to her sympathy.”

“Time alone will convince me of that,” replied Reinhardt sadly.

A dinner under such circumstances could have little to interest the reader, were it not for the incident which now forces itself upon our attention.

It was toward the close of the dinner, when the sudden advent of nurse Margaret in their midst, with something grasped very tightly in her hand, startled them over their dessert. Her excited manner — so different from the nurse's usually quiet demeanor — brought the broker to his feet with the exclamation : —

“ What's happened, Margaret? The child — has anything — is he ill? ”

“ I've found something in Mrs. Reinhardt's room, sir,” was the reply, “ that may assist you in finding her; and, sir, I hope you won't mind my coming in as I did, for I couldn't wait till morning! ”

“ Make no excuses,” he answered, taking the card from her trembling fingers. “ You have only done right in coming to me.”

He glanced at the bit of pasteboard in his hand with a cry of anger and disappointment. It contained the Cuban's address, given by him to Madeline the afternoon they parted at her father's house, and which had been dropped in her flight, to bear silent testimony now that she was gone. Madame de Bouvillé read the name and directions on the card with feelings of exultation that did not escape the bishop's keen glance, which from the first had been fixed intently on her face.

“ My worst suspicions are now confirmed! ” cried Reinhardt bitterly. “ She did not leave this house hastily and under a stress of passion, as I have tried to think, but in full knowledge as to where she was going, whom she was to meet, and what the end would be! ”

“Juan Fernandez sailed for Cuba the night she went to meet him,” said Beatrice, in triumph. “If you would find your wife, monsieur, you must seek her beyond the sea!”

“Follow them, and bring her back to the home she has disgraced?” Reinhardt cried, as with hysterical laughter he raised his glass on high. “Rather will I drink to my beautiful runaway; so fill up the glasses—fill them to the brim. I will give you a toast that will stir the sluggish blood!”

The detective listened calmly to the broker’s anathema, and even smiled in a satisfied way. Events were hurrying on the denouement he had arranged with Margaret’s kindly assistance. He now had Madame de Bouvillé in the toils, for, with the cunning and patience of a spider, under cover of his clerical garb, Wyckliff Ried had been spinning a web to catch this pretty fly. When the jolly Bishop of Campobello, under whose guidance the flock of fisher-folk were supposed to browse contentedly upon the spiritual manna, yielded to madame’s insinuating smile, and allowed her to carry him off for a *tete-à-tete*, it was always for the purpose of entangling her within the meshes.

“Hold!” he said, as Reinhardt finished his impassioned speech, and recklessly raised the wine to his lips. “Before we drink that toast, I wish to propose another.”

“And what shall it be, bishop?” asked the broker’s mother, surprised at the interruption on the part of their guest.

“A parting health to Madame de Bouvillé,” he

continued. "To whose machinations is due the misery of this hour!"

"The man is crazy, monsieur!" Beatrice interrupted, appealing to Reinhardt. Her face was pale with fear, but her voice was calm and firm.

The broker looked from one to the other, at a loss to comprehend the situation. He slowly set his glass on the table, leaving the wine untasted, and strode toward the detective, who had risen to his feet and seemed suddenly to be a man of commanding mien.

"Speak out, man — explain your meaning! What have you discovered that warrants this language?"

"That this woman is an imposter! That you are being swindled by her connection with the filibusters; and worse than this, that she has plotted with Juan Fernandez to make your wife an outcast! (Do not interrupt me, madame, till I have finished.) It was she who admitted the Cuban to your house on the night of the ball; it was she who bribed your wife's maid, in order that Fernandez might know who Cleopatra was, and so compromise her by his presence. You have been her dupe, and trusted implicitly in the friendship of an adventuress — the confederate of the gambler Roderick Brawn, and plighted to him in marriage — a woman as cruel, as devoid of principle, as she is beautiful and fascinating in manner!"

"My God!" — cried the broker, overcome by this sudden revelation, "can this be true?"

"It is false, monsieur!" hissed Beatrice, spring-

ing to her feet. "This man is some spy the Spaniards have set upon my track, and I defy him to prove one word he has said!"

All the tragic power and wonderful beauty of the woman was brought out at this moment, as she stood beneath the chandelier's soft light, one plump white arm, bared to the forearm and encircled by a band of pearls, outstretched in defiance toward the imperturbable bishop, who, having divested himself of his facial disguise, stood revealed to her as the English drummer she knew at Cosmos Park.

"Denial is quite useless, madame!" said the detective. "You see we have met before. I have no wish to persecute you, and am only doing my duty. If you will now confess the wrong you have done this man's wife, and leave the city at once, I promise you shall depart in safety and unmolested; refuse, and I will leave you to the fury of those whom you have deceived! In a few hours at most the telegraph will bring them news from Havana—news that your fellow conspiritor, Alvarez del Marco, is now in prison and has revealed everything to save himself, and that the expedition from America has been abandoned. You are a brave woman, Madame de Bouvillé, but I see you tremble at the thought of a traitor's death!"

With desperate courage she strove to overcome the horror his words conjured before her. The air seemed filled with muttered maledictions, and she saw the vengeful glances of the filibusters bent upon her, till instinctively she shrank from the downward sweep of their daggers; but like the play

of light along some wind-touched lake, vanishing quickly as it came, the picture faded from view and Beatrice regained her composure.

“Your threats do not frighten me,” she answered, “since there is none here who knew me in Cuba! With Juan Fernandez away from America, I can laugh at your offers of mercy. And you, Monsieur Clifford!” — turning to Reinhardt — “surely, you do not believe this of me? If I have sinned against your wife, it was in teaching my heart to love *you*, monsieur!”

“Too late! Too late!” murmured the broker, scarcely heeding her words, for he sat with his head low upon his arm, overcome by the force of the disclosure. “She came to me with truth upon her lips, and I drove her to desperation!”

Madame Beatrice made a movement to leave the room, saying, with a touch of scorn in her voice, that she had tired of this silly attempt at melodrama. Monsieur Clifford, when it suited him to do so, might see her alone; but it was beneath her dignity, as it was degrading to the patriotic sentiments she now espoused, to longer remain in the presence of a hireling of the Imperial government.

“Stay, madame!” the detective answered, politely barring the way with his hand upon the door. “Your complicity in this matter has not been made as clear as I could wish. So, once more, I give you a choice of alternatives.”

“And once more, you fool,” she replied in a half-whisper, “I say you are powerless to frighten me with threats!”

“ You betrayed yourself when you saw the Cuban’s card ; for in your look of triumph, though you knew it not, I read the knowledge that he has induced this woman to leave America with him. It was to secure this information, in the way that I have, that this little episode was planned with the nurse, and you know how well it has been carried out ! ”

“ And what have you gained by it ? A reputation as a blunderer. If you had kept Fernandez in America, it would be to your credit ; but as it is I make no confession, and you are powerless to prove anything against me.”

“ Remember, madame — these Cubans are quick to kill ! One word from me, and before you can leave the city, or devise other means of safety, they will clamor for your life ! ”

“ Who will they believe ? me, their ally — or you, a spy ? No, no, monsieur ; the sea holds all that could bring me to terms ! ”

“ Then I will invoke the sea to aid me,” said the Englishman with a sudden motion of his hand. “ Look, madame, on the ghost of a conspirator ! ”

By preconcerted arrangement the door swung open, and there revealed in a dim light, with hand upraised like some accusing statue, stood the Spaniard who had killed his brother on the *Storm King*.

“ *The serpent ring !* ” cried Beatrice with a piercing scream. “ *It is the murderer Gonzalo Carrasco !* ”

And when the household, aroused by that loud outcry, came hurrying to the supper-room, they

found Madame de Bouvillé writhing in a convulsive fit, her beautiful features distorted almost beyond recognition, while old Mrs. Reinhardt knelt over her favorite with a pitying look.

“Leave her, mother!” said the broker half savagely. “It were better that she died!”

* * * * *

The Storm King had, as Wyckliff Ried well knew, returned to Cuba two nights before; but had the detective known that it sailed without Fernandez, through the intervention of circumstances now to be related, that knowledge would have materially changed his plans.

It will be remembered the Cuban and Madeline, when last the reader's attention centered on them, stood together on the steamer's deck in thoughtful silence, awaiting the hour for departure from America. Each intent upon an absorbing theme, they saw nothing of a shadow stealthily approaching, which, as it emerged from the darkness of the ship into the moonlight, revealed itself as the Cuban who had guided Juan to Cosmos Park. He was again the bearer of a message from the councils of the filibusters, bidding him return for instructions in the hazardous matter he had volunteered his services for, which being the transmission of treasonable documents to their allies in Havana, to serve as the *avant courier* of the expedition, was an undertaking that meant death to him in the event of failure. The shadow glided to his side and spoke low in Spanish.

“Ha! it is you, Arturo?” said Juan with a start.

“Important news, señor,” was the quick reply. “My orders are to return with you at once.”

“What, am I not to sail to-night?”

“Yes; your plans will not be disturbed. But there is time enough, since the steamer does not leave until near midnight. It is not far to go, and I have a carriage in waiting.”

“But the señora,” whispered Juan in his ear. “Do you not see she is under my protection?”

“Remember your oath!” Arturo replied significantly. “The señora will be safe until your return. I have told you it is a matter important to the cause; so choose between love and country. Which shall it be, señor?”

A moment of rebellious passion, in which the Cuban’s brow grew dark as he pondered over the messenger’s words, and he turned to Arturo with the assurance that he would obey, at which the fellow went as silently as he had come, to await Juan’s appearance at the carriage.

“I must leave you for a time, Madelina,” said Fernandez on departing from the steamer. “But only for a little while — no longer than duty imperatively demands of me. You will remain on board and wait for me, señora? Think how swift the moments pass till I return; and then — ah! life will be very sweet when we live but for each other!”

The woman lifted her eyes to his as if silently acquiescing in all he had said; but her sadness of manner, as though she feared to be left alone, or was beset about by invisible pursuers, made him loth to leave her side. It was growing late, however,

and delay only lessened his chances of returning before the Storm King's time for steaming seaward ; so, tenderly drawing Madeline's wrap closer to keep off the night air, he suddenly imprinted a kiss upon her feverish brow, and then joined Arturo for the journey to Cosmos Park.

Thither, also, turns the reader's fancy, to find Fernandez involved in a quarrel with Roderick Brawn, and one entirely of the duelist's own seeking.

The Cuban, after a quick dispatch of the business with his fellow patriots, had passed into the club and found his friend Luddington, much the worse for liquor and bent on playing for large stakes, still sitting at the table and losing heavily. One after another the players had withdrawn from the game, convinced that the mythical tiger was not to be captured while Brawn held the cards, until only the younger and less experienced men remained. A glance showed Juan how matters stood. The young club man, rich and fond of life, had lost his money in reckless play, and now as a last hope, so fatal to many a gamester, he drew his check-book for a further assault upon the bank.

“ Go home now, Luddington,” interrupted the Cuban, laying his hand on the other's shoulder. “ Luck seems against you to-night, señor ! ”

A muttered curse escaped the duelist's lips at this interference, and the glance he shot at Fernandez, against whom he had conceived a violent dislike because of Madame de Bouillé, would have deterred one less courageous than the Cuban from his course.

“ The gov'nor can stand it,” was Luddington's

labored reply, “ and I’m going to break the bank ! Much obliged for advice, you know ; but really, old fellow, couldn’t think of leaving the game ! ”

Little heeding the obstinacy of a half-drunken man, Juan pressed the point still more firmly, while the spectators looked on with an instinctive dread of what was coming.

“ The gentleman seems able to manage his own affairs,” Roderick Brawn interrupted, springing to his feet. “ And as for your meddling, Fernandez, it shall cost you dear ! ”

“ I wish no quarrel with you, Señor Roderico,” the Cuban answered. “ But this man is my friend, and I must protect him now he is helpless.”

“ You are aware of the rules of the house ? ”

“ Perfectly, señor.”

“ And yet you insultingly defy my authority here ? ”

“ As you like, señor.” A careless shrug of the Cuban’s shoulders served to make the gambler all the more incensed. “ I respect no authority that compromises my honor.”

“ By that you mean,” continued Brawn, livid with rage, “ that I have robbed your friend ! ”

“ Pardon me, señor,” replied Juan with a hurried look at his watch, “ but I have no time for controversy.”

The memory of Madeline, and his duty to the filibusters, made him anxious to return to the steamer, especially as the time of sailing was not far distant, and he prudently made preparation for departure with Arturo.

“ You cowardly interloper ! ” exclaimed the duelist, dealing the Cuban a blow in the face with his open hand. “ Would you insult a gentleman without giving him satisfaction ? Take that for better manners, and if you have the courage of a mouse, choose your time and place ! ”

“ But for that blow, Señor Roderico, your insult would be borne ! ” The supple figure of Fernandez, surrounded by his dark-browed countrymen, trembled with passion as he spoke. “ And now I accept your challenge as becomes a Cuban ! ”

“ Then we will leave the matter with our friends,” replied the duelist turning away. “ Only let the day of meeting be soon.”

“ It must be to-night, señor ! ” said Juan. “ Tomorrow I shall be far away.”

“ To-night it shall be, then,” vouchsafed the other. “ The choice of places, under the rules of the code, belongs to you.”

“ I know the code,” returned the Cuban haughtily, “ and shall claim its privileges. We will fight with swords, Señor Roderico ; and the place, if it suits you, shall be your own instruction-room. As for the rest, my countryman Arturo is empowered to act for me in all things. He will select a good blade, señor, never fear ! ”

The preliminaries of the meeting were soon arranged by Colonel Graham, except that Brawn’s seconds would not listen to the proposition made by the Cuban, that the duel should take place in the club-house at Cosmos Park. It would involve their personal safety, besides bringing discredit on the

house ; and it was useless, they argued, to insist upon fighting here, when within easy distance by carriage there was a secluded spot free from molestation.

This strangest of strange battle-grounds, invested with the silence of death under the midnight moon, was an ancient burial place that, like its own sleepers, possessed little interest for the living ; and it was here, where the lichens crept from mound to mound, and tall, branching pine-trees mingled their shade with the lowly willow, that Juan Fernandez crossed blades at last with the dreaded swordsman.

The surgeon, a young physician of sporting proclivities, had some misgivings on the subject of dueling, and this occasioned a delay in the proceedings ; but he being at last won over, and carriages having been procured for conveyance of the party outside the city, (including Luddington himself, who, having become somewhat sobered by events, insisted upon going), it was not far from midnight when Brawn and the Cuban met within a little glade lighted by the refulgence of the moon shining through the tree-tops.

“ If you are ready, gentlemen,” said Colonel Graham in his bluff, soldierly manner, “ proceed with this unfortunate affair and have done with it at once.”

For answer the two principals advanced sword in hand, and the silence was intense, oppressive — strangely in keeping with the time and place — until their flashing blades met with a ringing sound, ominous indeed to the little group of watchers, and the

spell was broken. Fernandez was alert, buoyant, almost playful in manner; Brawn dogged, malicious, determined to kill. Yet for once, the duelist who had seemed invincible was clearly well matched in this Cuban rebel. His sword was turned aside again and again when he thought to give Juan a mortal wound, and only his own excellence as a swordsman, acquired through long experience with the rapiers, saved him from a return thrust that would have ended the duel.

“My countryman fights well,” remarked Arturo in an undertone to Luddington, who, bitterly accusing himself of being the cause of the trouble, stood by fearing for the life of his college friend. “He will kill this braggart American when he has played him out.”

But if Fernandez excelled the duelist in agility, and in strength and skill was evenly his match, Brawn was more fertile in expedients and possessed a better command of nerve, which gave him a certain advantage over the Cuban, who, anxious to end the duel that he might return to the steamer, now forced the battle with more zeal than judgment, and thus grew careless in his methods of defence.

“A right clever thrust, you Cuban dog!” cried Brawn in anger, as he felt the Cuban’s sword enter his shoulder. He realized, with a sickening fear, how near that keen blade had come to ending his life.

“It were better, gentlemen,” interposed Colonel Graham, that you let this quarrel go no further. To continue the duel now that it has reached this decisive stage, seems contrary to the code.”

This speech was received by Brawn with derision. It was his privilege, as the challenger, to fight till the death if he chose, and until he received a mortal wound he would never capitulate to this foreigner. So Arturo, much against his wishes, was told his countryman must remain and give the duelist battle.

“I know you now, Señor Roderico!” the Cuban said, as he stood at swordspoint with Brawn. “You have forced me to fight that you may kill me.”

“Yes, I always kill my man!” replied his antagonist, though inwardly he felt that in the present instance it was no easy task, for the Cuban had proved himself an excellent swordsman.

The duel was now resumed, and from this stage onward, as they wielded their weapons in the moonlight, it became a life-and-death struggle for supremacy.

“You called me a dog, señor!” hissed Fernandez, as he disarmed the gambler with a trick of the sword; “so I worry you as the dog does his prey before he kills it. Pick up your sword, Señor Roderico, for I will not kill you empty-handed!”

The incident was disastrous to Fernandez, for it lessened his caution in sword-play. Brawn’s defeat, on the contrary, seemed to make him doubly careful, and he watched for an opening in the Cuban’s guard while acting on the defensive. Suddenly, amid a rapid exchange of thrusts, Arturo cried out a warning to his countryman.

The sword of Roderick Brawn, quick to do the

bidding of its master, sank deep into the Cuban's breast, making a wound from which the hot blood gushed in streams.

"Ah, Madelina!" he gasped, "the sword has saved you!" And with these words trembling on his lips, he fell insensible into Luddington's arms.

"'Tis an ugly wound," said the surgeon when he had done all in his power, "but not necessarily fatal, if he has good care. A little lower, though, and Brawn's sword would have pierced his heart."

"Yes," observed Colonel Graham," he meant it for a mortal stroke. "But it was his only hope of winning, for the Cuban handled his rapier like a soldier. Egad! but he's a good one, and deserves to live."

The victorious Brawn, meanwhile, faint from the wound he received, had been helped to his carriage and conveyed back to Cosmos Park, where he hoped to hear in the morning that Fernandez was dead.

And the moon, as it rose high above the tree-tops, looked down upon a deserted glade stained with human blood, where so lately the din of battle had broken the stillness of night. Then sailing on in a river of fleecy cloud, lighting up the dark old streets of the city, it seemed to follow the Cuban's carriage with a kindly eye, and only the moon saw it stop before Luddington's home, through whose portals was borne the man it had seen wounded in the glade. Strange sights and secrets are thine, O moon!

But this was not all the moon saw that night of the duel in the glade. It sailed over tall ships, and saw its own image in the sea. A woman's eyes

looked up to its great height from the deck of a foreign steamer in the dock, and Madeline prayed for rest, and love, and forgiveness, in realms far above the moon's bright course. Her brain reeled with terror as she realized that she was alone, deserted, a fugitive from all she held dear; and that strange, fascinating light in the water, surely it was drawing her to its embrace! It was the first longing for death she had known, but now that it was near, she shrank from ending a life that had become embittered. Better to live, she thought, and expiate her faults in a world of suffering, than to die like a coward, and leave only the memory of a suicide as a heritage for those she loved. The steamer's motion warned her that the time for action had arrived, and Madeline, unnoticed by the hurrying sailors, groped her way to the shore, to wander, she knew not whither. On and on she went, still keeping near the sea, and catching glimpses of its alluring light through open spaces along the docks, until all strength of mind and body succumbed to the terrible strain, and she seemed to be drifting out upon the tide of oblivion.

The moon, sole witness of the scene, saw a childish form—that of the hunchback Dandy—standing like a sentinel by the woman's side, and its kindly face, long after the Storm King disappeared oceanward, was turned toward them in mute companionship.

CHAPTER X.

“ ‘Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to Heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news.”

— YOUNG.



THIS DAY following the denouement concocted by Wyckliff Ried, which resulted in dethroning Madame de Bouillé from her high position in the broker's home, saw the detective in earnest consultation with Gregory Maitland and his son-in-law, Clifford Reinhardt.

“ I have chartered a steamer for Havana,” the latter is saying, “ and mean to find my

wife. Until her own lips condemn her, guilty though she may be, I cannot believe she is utterly false to me.”

“ God bless you for those words, Clifford,” the old merchant faltered. “ Remember she is the victim of a foul conspiracy ! ”

The detective listened to their conversation in respectful silence, since it grew into an exhaustive consideration of family affairs, in which he had no part, and concerning which he was not supposed to have much, if any, knowledge.

"As far as your plans go," said he at length, addressing himself to Reinhardt, "they are well enough in their way, only I do not think you will find your wife in Cuba."

"Indeed!" was the broker's surprised exclamation. "You assured me quite to the contrary last night."

"Yes; but I was mistaken it seems. Madame de Bouvillé, you will remember, intimated certain things by her knowledge of the Cuban's movements."

"Quite true; there was that in her manner, too, which indicated that she spoke the truth. On what hypothesis, then, do you base this new-found hope?"

"On the fact that Fernandez did not sail in the *Storm King*, but lies dangerously wounded at the house of his college chum."

"Juan Fernandez in America!" cried Reinhardt. "This seems incredible. Take me to him—at once, this very hour—till I wring the truth from his accursed lips!"

"No need of that," the detective answered sadly. "The sword has done its work; and since he thinks it is his death-wound, he has confessed what little he had to do with your wife's disappearance."

"Then you have seen him—talked with him?"

"Yes; last night, in my character of a drummer, I visited some of the old haunts; and falling in with one of the night hawks, a hackman whom I had done a slight service, I learned from him that Fernandez had fought a duel with Madame de Bouvillé's lover, the fencing-master, Roderick Brawn, and that he conveyed the wounded man away in his

carriage. He knew me as the Cuban's friend, and on a promise of secrecy guided me to him this morning. The rest you shall know when you are in the mood for listening."

Maitland, unable to longer control himself, plied Ried with questions about his daughter, to all of which the detective was forced to give a negative answer.

"I am sorry to say that Mrs. Reinhardt's whereabouts at the present time, notwithstanding the vigilance of those searching for her, remain as great a mystery as ever."

After exacting a promise from Reinhardt that he would not interfere with his wishes, which were, in effect, that Juan should not be placed under police surveillance as an offender against the law, the detective made his hearers familiar with the Cuban's story of the night he was wounded, dwelling minutely upon his accidental meeting with Madeline, her reluctant consent (under most extenuating circumstances) to elope with him to Cuba, and giving in detail many of the incidents already known to the reader.

"Well, what shall we do next, Mr. Ried?" asked the broker. "I mean in regard to Mrs. Reinhardt. If she left the steamer on that unfortunate night, as you seem to think she did, is it not strange no tidings have been heard of her in the city?"

"Yes," was the slow, deliberate reply; "it is strange indeed. Unless—but no, I will not say that. My conclusions may be wrong, and it is possible, after all, that she is now on her way to Cuba."

"But you are keeping something back. What is it you fear to tell me?"

"Unless — mind, I only surmise it — your wife is dead."

"Dead! My darling Madeline dead?" cried poor old Maitland. "Oh, man! this punishment is too great to bear."

Reinhardt steadied himself by a supreme command of nerve, and, moved to compassion at sight of Maitland's grief, he crossed to the old man's side and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Don't give way to this new fear — it is only a phantom," he assured him. "I cannot, will not believe her dead! She must live to know the truth, to hear me say that I forgive her; and in that hope, if heaven grants me nothing more, I look forward to our meeting in life!"

"It is only surmise on my part," said the detective, "and perhaps it is wrong to harbor the thought; but from what I know of your wife's condition that night — her irresponsible state of mind, you know — it occurs to me that if she left the Storm King, as she naturally would since Fernandez could not return to join her, circumstances might have led her to"—

"Hush!" said Reinhardt in an undertone. "I know what you would say, but spare *him* the thought of suicide!"

"Then we had better end this interview and await developments," replied the detective. "Meet me at my hotel to-morrow, and be prepared to learn the worst. In the meantime do not seek to find me, for

I shall begin a new search — one that may lead me into strange, unhappy places."

A shudder passed over Reinhardt as he bowed in acquiescence, for he guessed something of the other's meaning, and realized that he was to visit that gloomiest of places — the morgue.

As for the brilliant adventuress, Madame de Bouillé, she had in the meantime vanished from the world of Beacon Hill, not even old Mrs. Reinhardt's friendship having withstood the test so dramatically applied, while fear of the filibusters had driven her into hiding in an obscure part of the city.

Here it is, in a meanly-furnished room, accessible only through dark and winding passages, that we find the beautiful Beatrice listening for a step on the stairs. For hours she had waited with the door fastened by its heavy bolts, anticipating the coming of Roderick Brawn. It was a third-rate hotel, but she was safest there. No one who had known her at Cosmos Park would be likely to visit this dilapidated hostelry, frequented by marketmen from converging sections of country, thirsty wayfarers who bestowed their patronage upon the little sample-room, and a sprinkling of low politicians from various precincts.

"At last he has come!" she joyfully exclaimed, for some one was slowly making his way along the passage. "I had begun to think he, too, would leave me to my fate."

It was, indeed, the duelist Brawn who stumbled up the stairs; and following him at a safe distance, though he knew it not, was the light-footed Cuban

known among the filibusters as Arturo. The duelist had waited until dark before answering Madame de Bouvillé's urgent summons, but despite his cautious movements on leaving Cosmos Park, Arturo dogged his footsteps all the way. He heard Brawn speak her name, Beatrice, with a sort of fiendish satisfaction, and having seen him enter the room at the end of the passage, the Cuban curled himself up at the door and listened.

“Why have you left me so long in my loneliness, Roderick, my love?” he heard her ask. “Did you not know my life was in danger? Oh, I have endured untold horrors since I saw you last. The ghost of Gonzalo Carrasco, as I thought, came to haunt me from his ocean grave, and I betrayed myself.”

Madame's soft white arms were clasped around her handsome cavalier, and he held her close with his dreaded sword arm, while the other hung limp and useless at his side. She had dressed for his coming, and were it not for the paleness of her face, thought Brawn, she never looked more beautiful.

But he must return to Cosmos Park before his absence was noticed; so, seeking to devise some plan for the future, he acquainted Beatrice with the duel he had fought with Fernandez.

“Yes; he will die unless a miracle saves him,” he said in answer to her questioning. “I meant the thrust to kill.”

“Poor Juan!” she said. “Could nothing but death atone for his slight fault?”

“Death is the great reconciler of foes,” he

answered. “It was his life or mine, Beatrice, for I had sworn, the day you plighted troth with me, that nothing should come between”—

Madame de Bouillé tore herself from her lover’s grasp, for his language had conjured a fearful picture before the brain, and turned upon him with the ferocity of a tigress.

“Roderick Brawn!” she hissed, “you are as much a murderer as if you had secretly sent a bullet through his heart. A curse on your code! What is it but a barbarous, murderous thing? Tell me why you forced Fernandez to cross swords with you, and he a mere boy in your skillful hands!”

“Because,” replied the duelist sullenly, “you chose to lavish on him the love that should be mine.”

“Oh, blind fool of chance!” was her reply. “But I will not reproach you, since upon my head must this sin be visited. Had you known the Cuban was but my friend, my tool, you would not have challenged him. But do you know if she—the woman he eloped with on the night of the duel—is with him?”

“I know nothing of all this, Beatrice!” he impatiently made answer. “I am like one in a dream. First, I learn I have fought the wrong man; then that some woman in love with this Cuban is left disconsolate because my sword, instead of his, was the truest steel. Damn me if I understand your deep-laid schemes! If it is not Fernandez who stands between us, it must be the Englishman you seem so fond of—ha! you start, madame. Then it is him you love, my pretty schemer?”

Madame de Bouvillé had drawn near the door and stood listening with strained ear, while a wave of ashy pallor swept over her features; but aroused by Brawn's sneering remark, she angrily retorted:—

“No, no—not him! He is a detective, and holds us in his power—you as well as me! Think of what he knows concerning your life at Cosmos Park—enough to ruin you here. Nothing stands between us now but death; and if you would save me from that, Roderick Brawn, take me from here to-night. I cannot breathe in safety where these filibusters are!”

“Then swear to be true to me, Beatrice! Only assure me of this; let me feel that I have a place in your heart. You are indeed in danger, for these Cuban bloodhounds are keen of scent; yet, once across the continent with me, I defy them to track you out. But you hesitate; your indecision augurs”—

“I swear it, Roderick!” she interrupted. “A sudden fear overcame me, that is all; for I thought I heard a noise upon the stairs—a light, stealthy movement that reminded me of Arturo. Oh, I am growing childish in my fancies! It was probably nothing but an echo from the street, and yet—hark, there it is again within the passage!”

For answer Brawn strode to the door, pistol in hand, and threw it open so that a narrow lane of light fell across the gloom, illuminating a space straight ahead to the stairs, but leaving in shadow a portion of the passage on either side the doorway.

“There is no one there, Beatrice,” he assured her after a hasty inspection. “It is fancy that affrights

you." He saw nothing of the cloaked figure in the passage, since the door, opening outward at the caprice of its builder, formed a safe hiding-place for the eavesdropping Arturo. "Come, throw off this fear and walk with me to the stairway: it will train your nerves for dangers that are real. The police will soon be on my track, should the Cuban die; and with a new menace in the person of this English detective, it would be madness to stay and meet the issue. So be in readiness to leave here at midnight, for I shall return for you by that time."

Arm in arm they passed from the room, and hardly had they crossed its threshold, to part at the stairway after a tender leave-taking, when Arturo glided from his hiding place and secreted himself within the apartment.

Madame de Bouvillé, all unconscious of the danger, returned to her room, carefully fastening the door with bolt and key, and thus entrapped the traitress was menaced by a Nemesis that knew not the name of mercy.

* * * * *

The disappearance of Mrs. Reinhardt, so far as it had become publicly known, was attributed to a deplorable condition of mind incident to the fright she had received on the night of the ball, and letters offering friendly advice in the matter, or that were voluminously reminiscent about people who had wandered from home, reached the broker by each successive mail.

Madeline, in the meantime, as the reader must long ago have surmised, had found a place of refuge

in the Barlow household, since the hunchback's meeting with her on the night of her flight is chronicled in the previous chapter.

The incidents of that night were with difficulty recalled when she awoke to consciousness and found herself among strangers. A fever had slowly burned itself out during the interval of her departure, until now, three days after, it left her sick and helpless. At first she fancied she was abandoned in some lonely place to die of thirst, but at her feeble cry for water a cooling draught was placed to her lips, and with a prayer of thankfulness she sank back among the pillows, to awaken again when the light had broadened in the east and the sun, rising over a forest of masts, shone into the dingy room in which she lay.

A figure sat by her bedside, as it had all through the long hot night; and Madeline with a start, when she saw those big, kindly eyes looking into hers, recognized the little hunchback she had interceded for the night of the masquerade.

"Don't be afraid, missus," he said reassuringly. "It's me, Dandy; the kid wot you coaxed away from the cop, you know."

"Oh, yes; I remember," she answered vaguely. "But tell me, child, how came I here?"

"Tom carried you in his arms after you fainted," replied the hunchback. "You was on the steamer, and we was prowlin' around late at night. Don't you remember that, too? I followed you when you left the steamer, cos I knew you was the lady wot was so kind to me, and I was afeer'd you'd fall into

the dock. Then we saw you faint — and you hurt your head when you fell. Tom wouldn't let me get a doctor; so we took you home to Mammy Barlow, and you've been here ever since."

Then it all came back to her — the flight from home, her meeting with Juan Fernandez, and their parting on board the *Storm King* — with such vividness of detail that Madeline covered her face as if to shut out the spectacle.

"And haven't any of my friends been to see me?" she asked in a forlorn tone." My father, or — sister Edith?"

"No," replied the hunchback wonderingly.

"Not even nurse Margaret?" she continued, forgetting in her eagerness that Dandy could have no knowledge of such people.

"No'm; nobody knows where you is," said the boy, "They won't let me git out to tell your folks."

The truth of the situation by degrees became plain to her, when she discovered that the Barlows had dispossessed her of the valuables she had the night she was brought there, even to her finger-rings and ear-drops. She had fallen among thieves, and was virtually a prisoner in their hands. Perhaps they meant to kill her in order to conceal their wrong-doing. Ill and weak as she was, she would be powerless to oppose their wicked designs with no friend near but the little hunchback; and, while nothing so dreadful might be premeditated, she shrank in terror from the very thought. Death, that once seemed a boon, now appalled her with its terrors.

“ Only to live,” she prayed, “ to be near my child and watch over him. Grant me this, O merciful God, and I will be content ! ”

The hours dragged slowly along toward nightfall, with only the appearance of Mammy Barlow, whose ministrations were of a most kindly nature, to break the monotony. Mrs. Reinhardt felt somewhat reassured at sight of her ; for though uncouth in manners and speech, the woman seemed incapable of doing Madeline an injury beyond, possibly, keeping her a prisoner for a time. To all questions she was non-committal, save that she once vouchsafed the information that Tom and her husband, having disposed of some of their booty, were drinking themselves into insensibility.

“ When they gets sober,” she said by way of a decisive answer, “ I’ll know what to tell you. But you aint able to leave here now, anyway ; so you’d better keep quiet, or the fever’ll be on bad again. They sha’n’t harm you, my pretty—whatever else they do ! ”

It gradually grew dark within the sick-room, deepening from twilight into the solemn blackness of night, and Mrs. Reinhardt, after tossing uneasily upon her pillow, fell into the deep slumber of a fever patient. A light was brought in and carefully shaded from her eyes. Mammy Barlow, whatever her faults, had acted the part of a kind-hearted nurse, and Madeline’s needs were well supplied. On the table by her side stood a tumbler of milk and brandy, with other simple remedies her nurse’s intelligence had prescribed ; and that she might not

want for anything through the night, little Dandy was allowed to remain on watch.

The hunchback, who had feigned to be very sleepy, grew suddenly wide awake when his foster-mother had left the room. He crept to the door and listened. The Barlows, father and son, could be heard down-stairs in maudlin conversation, and were inclined to be angry over the division of their spoils. But this, to Dandy's mind, was favorable to a plan he had decided upon, since his absence might not be discovered before morning.

He waited until all was still, and then raising the window, which was in the second story of the building and overlooked the water, he took a survey of the narrow dock below. The moon had not yet risen, and the tide being at its highest point, so that a swimmer might dive from an elevated position with safety, the time was well suited to the undertaking. Poising his body an instant on the casement, the hunchback, lithe and active of limb, shot downward into a clear space of water, and after diving again to avoid an on-coming boat, he emerged from the dock a hundred yards from the place where he had plunged into it. He was dripping wet and minus coat, hat and shoes, and it occurred to Dandy, on reflection, that in this plight he could not reach Beacon Hill, to find the house where he was captured on the night of the ball, without challenging the attention of the first patrolman he encountered. But, nothing daunted, the little thief thought of a way to provide himself with dry clothes, and like a veritable wharf-rat he again entered the water

and swam to a vessel's side, ignorant that his movements were being watched by a patrolman creeping along the same side of the dock.

"You're wanted, me lad," said the grinning official, laying a heavy hand on the hunchback as he scrambled over the rail. "It's asking after you they've been doing at the capt'in's office." And so, despite his efforts, Dandy soon found himself behind prison bars.

Early the following day, as previously agreed upon, a carriage drew up in front of the Parker House, and Clifford Reinhardt, accompanied by his mother, alighted therefrom and entered the detective's hotel.

Wyckliff Ried looked slightly annoyed at the appearance of the old lady, but on being informed that she wished to be present at the interview, so great was her anxiety to learn if he had found any trace of Madeline, he led the way to his apartments without comment, mentally assuring himself, however, that her visit was a sign of reconciliation between mother and daughter.

"My mother, as you see, could not wait in suspense until my return," the broker began. "I hope her presence here will not embarrass you in anything that you have to tell me."

"Still, with all due respect, I wish she had deferred her visit until another time," was Ried's reply. "What I have to tell you is not of a pleasant nature, and perhaps"—turning to Mrs. Reinhardt—"the lady is not prepared for tragic disclosures."

The proud aristocrat impulsively seized his hand and implored him not to spare her feelings in the matter, adding in a broken voice: "I, sir, suffer from an inward wound. What you have to say can add but little to the agony of my heart; for, alas! I have been cruelly unjust to Madeline, and all because of a foolish woman's pride."

"Spare yourself a recital that gives you pain," the detective said, to check her volubility. "I think I understand the kindly motive that brings you here." Then turning to Reinhardt, he said, "I will proceed on the supposition that you knew I intended to begin my search this morning at the morgue."

"Yes," was Reinhardt's answer. "Go on, pray."

The detective then detailed his movements since early morning, when he began a round of the places where people found drowned, or who had met their death in any unnatural way, would be likely to be brought for identification, or pending an investigation.

"We left no stone unturned," said Ried in conclusion, "in our efforts to find a clue. Going from place to place, we saw strange sights and became conversant with new phases of crime and misery; but it is not my purpose to speak of these, since the papers in due time will acquaint you with their history. I will simply say that on information given me by a friendly reporter, I learned that an unknown woman — young and very beautiful — lay dead in an out-of-the-way public house where she had taken refuge two nights before."

"Yes, yes — go on!" Reinhardt commanded,

seeing that the detective cast an apprehensive glance in the direction of his mother.

“A detective, you must understand, never accepts the theories of others, until he has investigated for himself; so, in spite of certain incongruities of description, I felt impelled to go with my friend of the press. I found that a murder had been committed — that is all.” The speaker stopped abruptly, as if loth to acquaint his listeners with the details of the crime.

“And you found the murdered woman was? — ”

“Madame de Bouvillé,” the detective answered. “She has paid the penalty of her treachery.”

A cry of terror escaped the old lady’s lips, and she covered her eyes with trembling hands, as if to shut out all sight of the murdered Beatrice she had loved so well.

“Horrible! — this news you tell me,” said the broker with a shudder. He saw, as in a vision, her golden head pillow'd on the cold marble of the morgue: closed for ever those eyes of wondrous beauty: silent — kissed by death — the full red lips that had smiled so dangerously near his own.

“O, Fate!” he cried, “thy retribution has been swift and sure!”

After a short silence, the detective resumed his story of the tragedy. Madame de Bouvillé had been stabbed to the heart, dying where they found her, and apparently without a struggle; for the avenging Arturo had done his work with cunning skill. The assassin, it was thought, had stifled the woman’s cries before giving her a death-wound, since

no outcry was heard in the house, and the murder was not discovered until morning.

“But you say nothing of the murderer,” interrupted Reinhardt’s mother. “Have the police no clew to his identity?”

“The only person known to have visited her was her affianced lover, the fencing-master Roderick Brawn. He was seen to leave the hotel at midnight, and the belief is that he killed her in a quarrel.”

“Have they arrested this blackleg, think you?” the broker asked.

“He has left the city,” replied Wyckliff Ried, “and has covered his tracks so cleverly as to baffle pursuit. I shall not, personally, concern myself about his arrest. I am not, moreover, possessed of facts that warrant a belief in his guilt; and experience makes me loth to hang a man on circumstantial evidence, as would be the case, doubtless, were Brawn to be captured.”

“Then you have another theory in regard to the murder of Madame de Bouvillé?”

“Yes,” was the reply; “I think she was killed by one of the Cubans she had plotted to betray. The discovery of her treachery has set them wild with rage. Still the evidence against Roderick Brawn is strong in law, and he may have murdered her in a fit of passion. But unless the truth is known before I leave America, I shall think the duelist returned to madame’s room to assist her in escaping from the city; and finding the avenger’s dagger had done its mission, he must have realized how futile would be

his protestations of innocence if he gave the alarm, and so fled from the scene in grief and desperation. I can add nothing more to my story, except to say that the murdered woman, thanks to the generosity of Juan Fernandez, will to-morrow be given Christian burial in Gethsemane."

The conversation then turned upon the detective's search for Madeline, but to the disappointment of his visitors, Wyckliff Ried had made no discoveries regarding her.

"I have thought it best to offer a liberal reward to whoever gives information leading to her discovery," said Reinhardt when taking his leave. "It will serve, I trust, to stimulate public interest in the search."

A knock on the door preceded the entrance of a messenger from police headquarters, bearing a note for the detective. The latter's pleased expression, on breaking the seal, did not escape Reinhardt's eye, and he delayed his departure until the message had been read.

"Hope at last!" said Wyckliff Ried, turning to the broker. "I will read you the good news:—

"A young offender—a hunchback who has long been wanted for thievery—was arrested last night by a patrolman of the second precinct. He was caught prowling about vessels in the dock. The prisoner tells a rambling story of a woman being detained against her will, and we have thought it well to communicate with you, since his arrest may have some bearing upon the case you are interested in. Return with the messenger if you wish an interview with the hunchback."

Leaving the subsequent movements of the detective and his friends to the reader's imagination, we

return once more to the Barlow household, where Madeline awoke, the morning following Dandy's arrest, feeling so much better that, with her captor's help, she was able to dress herself and sit by the window.

"If you will let me stay here until I get strong," she said to Mrs. Barlow, after trying in vain to eat the slight breakfast brought her, "I will go away somewhere, and say nothing about my loss. You have been kind to me, and I do not wish you harm."

"Well, my pretty, you'd ought to thought o' that before sendin' the boy to your friends," was the woman's reply. "He'll git us all into trouble, maybe!"

"Indeed, I did not send him away," Madeline protested. "I was too ill last night to know what happened."

"He's gone, anyway," was the curt reply, "and Tom won't promise anything till he finds him!"

Sick at heart, yet with a hope the hunchback, having remembered the house he was captured in during the masquerade, had gone in search of her husband, Madeline resigned herself to a fit of weeping.

"Oh, Clifford! Clifford!" she sobbed aloud, "if you could but know the truth!"

She was standing at a window, looking down into the sunlit water, and knew not that Clifford Reinhardt, followed by his mother, had quietly entered the room, and overheard her sorrowful soliloquy.

"My darling!" he cried, springing forward to fold her in his arms. "The truth is known at last!"

Speak to me, Madeline — my wife — and say I am forgiven!"

But reason had again deserted its throne. The suddenness of their meeting had been more than she could bear. Madeline lay weak and helpless in her husband's arms — unconscious alike of fervent kisses and the kindly ministrations of his mother.

Only once, in the long, trance-like sleep that followed, did she realize that they had taken her home to Beacon Hill. Then she raised herself from the pillows and gazed upon the anxious group at her bedside, but the faces she saw seemed stern and unfamiliar, until one more kindly than the others, bending over her with all a lover's tenderness, brought back a gleam of intelligence.

"Clifford! * * Baby!" was all she said, but her recognition, though only momentary, was a pleasant augury of the recovery that rapidly supervened.

The murder of Madame de Bouvillé, in the course of police investigation, had led to the arrest of Juan Fernandez as a principal in the duel with Roderick Brawn, against the peace and good morals of the Commonwealth, and the Cuban was placed under strict surveillance at Luddington's home until his removal could with safety be insisted upon.

His wound, in the meantime, had occasioned many a grave shake of the doctor's head, but a sound constitution and the best of care were in his favor; and Juan, sad at times and cynical as to his fate, noted the return of strength from day to day with the interest of a man who knows a prison awaits him.

The detective had made overtures looking to an escape back to Cuba, but Fernandez, knowing his true character, was suspicious of Ried's friendship.

"Doctor," said the detective one day when the Cuban's recovery was well advanced, "is your patient able to stand the rigor of an ocean voyage?"

"That, sir, depends upon one thing. If you mean to inveigle him into the hands of the Spaniards, my answer is an emphatic No!"

"I assure you on the honor of a gentleman," the Englishman calmly answered, "that I have no such base intentions."

"This document, as you see," he continued, addressing himself to the Cuban in particular, "bears the seal and signature of Don Sebastian, and is dated at Havana. It is a full pardon for Juan Fernandez, lately concerned in a rebellious plot against the government, and allows him to return to Cuba without fear of molestation!"

"But, señor," said Juan, "I cannot forget that you have hunted down my countrymen and destroyed poor Cuba's hope of freedom!"

"Hardly so bad as that, Fernandez," replied the detective. "I have only prevented a piece of Spanish butchery at sea; for had the filibusters sailed from America, the plot of Madame de Bou—"

"Hush, señor!" the Cuban interrupted. "She is now among the dead. Tell me rather of the living. Madelina — she is well?"

"Yes; the señora is well and happy."

"And you told him — Señor Reinhardt — that she was not to blame?"

“ I have told him all,” answered the Englishman, “ but it is now of yourself you must think. You may be removed from this house to prison any day ; and since Roderick Brawn is known to have left the country, you are likely to get a long sentence. You saved my life, Fernandez : I now offer you your liberty. Don Sebastian exacts no pledge from you ; so this leaves you free to take up arms for Cuba, if ever the time for freedom comes — and God knows I hope the Cubans, with every misgoverned race upon the globe, will have their rights some day ! ”

A murmur of approval ran through the room as Juan, with patriotic zeal, warmly grasped the detective’s extended hand and assured him he would trust his friendship.

“ And you, my kind friend,” he continued, turning to Luddington, “ will not forget me when I leave your country ? ”

“ No fear of that, old fellow ! ” returned the Bostonian. “ But as a memento of you, Fernandez, I wish to keep this sword with which you were wounded, since it was brought here through mistake on the night of the duel. It will remind me that you generously imperiled your life in my behalf ! ”

“ As you will, señor,” said the Cuban, taking the weapon and mechanically trying its temper, as if he were about to meet a foe. “ But let it remind you, also, that through Señor Roderico the sword has saved a woman’s honor ! ”

The Englishman dined that afternoon — the last he was to spend in America — with Clifford Reinhardt at a down-town club, and in a private interview laid

before him his plans for escaping with Juan Fernandez.

“ You see the danger in allowing the Cuban to be placed on trial here,” he argued. “ Not only the duel at midnight, *but matters anterior to that event*, and which, unfortunately, concern your domestic happiness not a little, will likely be made public in a court of justice ! ”

“ I realize that such a disclosure of my wife’s movements that night is much to be dreaded,” said the broker, “ and agree to your suggestion. The steamer I have chartered will send a boat ashore for you at dark, and your party must be at the dock on its arrival. I shall arrange with the captain of the steamer to apprise me of your departure by sending up a signal rocket.”

“ Very well,” said the detective, “ I will be responsible for the Cuban’s going. I would like also to see your little protégé, the hunchback, once more ; but I must now see about the burial of Gonzalo Carrasco. The poor wretch died last night, I hear—tortured by the ghost of his murdered brother.”

So perfectly arranged were all the details of the escape, even to eluding the careless officer who guarded the prisoner’s door, that the Englishman and Juan Fernandez reached their steamer that night without adventure ; and within the next hour, standing sad and thoughtful by the side of Wyckliff Ried, the Cuban saw the land disappear in impenetrable gloom.

“ Farewell, Madelina ! — farewell ! ” he murmured. “ The saints preserve you forever, señora ! ”

At the time set for the signal Clifford Reinhardt, peering seaward through the darkness, saw a slender stream of fire shoot up to the lowering clouds, and like "a bearded meteor trailing light," burst into a thousand brilliant fragments to illumine the waters.

The broker turned from the window with a sigh of relief, to find that Madeline had quietly entered and was standing at his side, looking even more beautiful to-night, with love's joyous light shining in her eyes, than on the day she had entered this ancestral home a wife only in the name.

"Are you reading your future in the stars, Clifford?" she asked with tender interest. "I trust it is a happy one, my husband!"

"My soul has found its star, darling," he answered, drawing her close to his heart. "God keep me within the circle of its own sweet influence!"

As in some grouping on the mimic stage, when those whose estrangement has formed the principal interest of the drama have triumphed over evil, the prompter's signal veils the unreal in seeming reality, and leaves the mind to fond imaginings, so now the curtain slowly falls upon these reunited lives, whose misery and final happiness we have seen through strange interpositions of fate: and as the picture fades before the vision, to appear again, it may be, in some far-off, dim perspective, there must inevitably remain a childlike trustfulness in that

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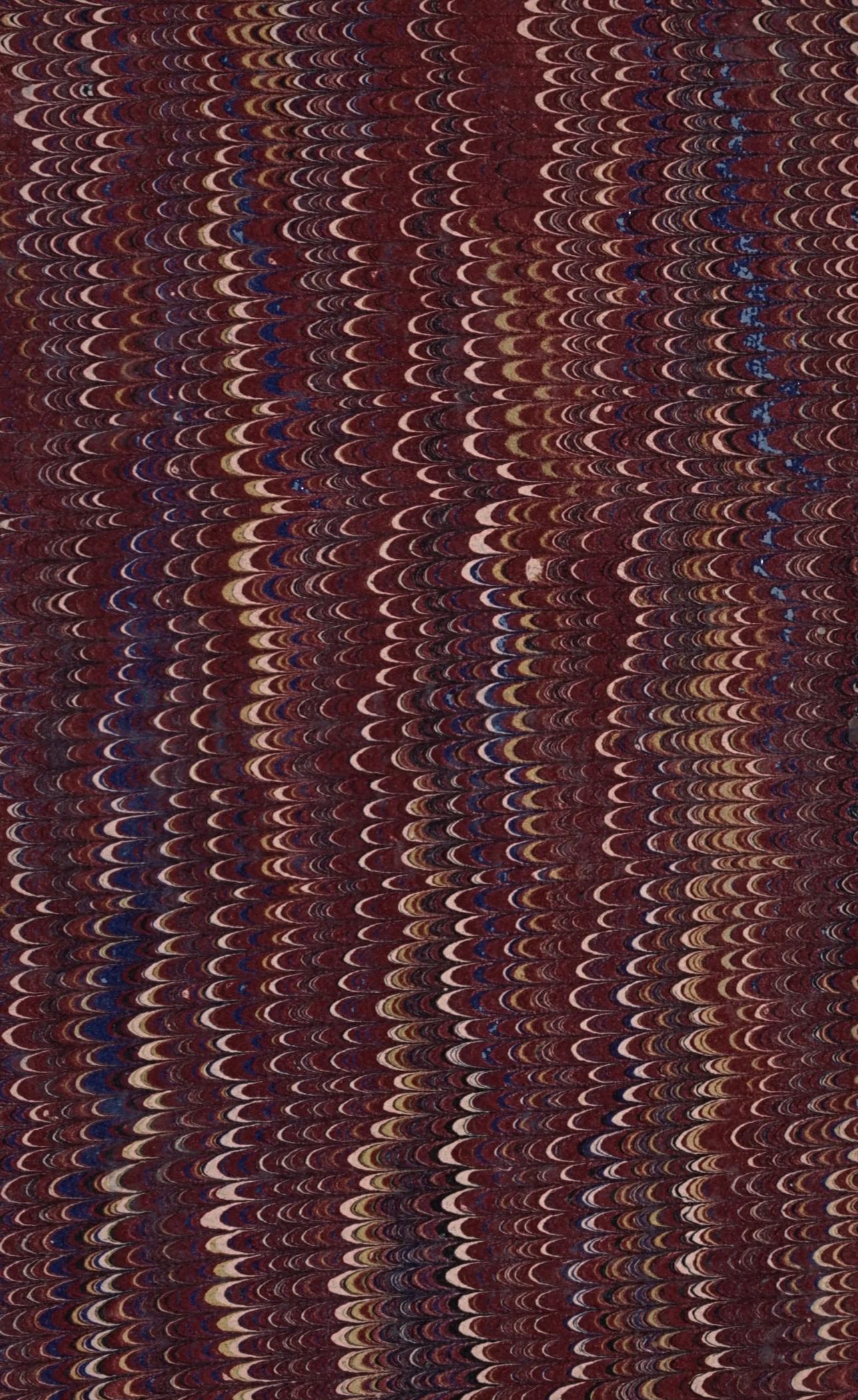
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